SPECIAL EDITION

DECISION-POINT TACTICS

(Fighting the Enemy, Not the Plan!)

Techniques and Procedures
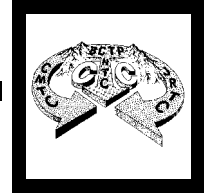
FOREWORD

Every edition of CALL's *CTC Quarterly Bulletin* presents articles filled with *techniques and procedures* that work.

We usually present these techniques and procedures in five or six articles, covering fairly diverse topics - all with the intent of transferring useful knowledge from the field and the schoolhouse *back* to the field and the schoolhouse.

This issue's no different - disseminating useful techniques and procedures to the Total Army with the intent of helping unit's "get it right" the first time. The difference with this issue. . .you can tell from the cover. . . is that you're getting the techniques and procedures *straight from the enemy!*

If you've already been through a rotation at the National Training Center (NTC), then you're already all too familiar with the legendary proficiency of the OPFOR. They're probably as tough a maneuver enemy as we'll face on the globe.

Yet, the OPFOR you face today, or tomorrow, is not the same OPFOR you faced yesterday. Just as the Army adapts to the changing world, and less definable enemies, the OPFOR adapts as well. New force structures and new equipment, on both sides, results in change.

Decision-Point Tactics spelled out by the OPFOR's commander in this issue provide incredible insight in *How To* of mission execution by today's OPFOR. This OPFOR primer has great value for BLUFOR commanders in learning about how the OPFOR plans, prepares and then executes their missions.

The greatest value for BLUFOR commanders, however, should be the realization that the techniques and procedures inherent in the OPFOR's decision-point tactics equally apply to the BLUFOR.
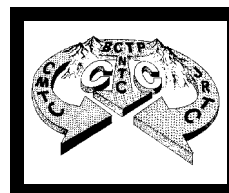
IF U.S elements reach a point in their Home-Station training where they can deploy to a Combat Training Center (CTC) or a real-world operation and execute decision-point tactics, *THEN* those elements will be structured for mission success.

Just listen to your "enemy". . .they've read our book and are using it successfully. Don't just "know your enemy", . . *learn from your enemy!*

EDWARD J. FITZGERALD III
COL, IN
Director, Center for Army Lessons Learned

**Combat Training Center (CTC)
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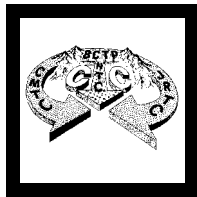
DECISION-POINT TACTICS
(Fighting The Enemy, Not The Plan!)

**By LTC Pete Palmer, Commander, 2d/11th ACR (NTC OPFOR) and
CPT Jim Crider, Commander, G Troop, 2/11 ACR (NTC OPFOR)**

Chapter I: BACKGROUND OF DECISION-POINT TACTICS

This overview discusses various considerations common to the implementaion of decision-point tactics, regardless of mission. Additional considerations specific to the attack, meeting battle, and the defense are discussed, with examples, later in this bulletin.

Development of Decision-Point Tactics

Something that has not ever changed in the OPFOR is its desire to win. Like Lt. Backsight Forethought in *The Defense of Duffer's Drift,* **the OPFOR is able to remain battle-focused and learn from its mistakes.** As the OPFOR studied its new doctrine and learned the nuances of the new systems upgrades, it became quickly apparent that the old way of doing business would no longer work. Extensive planning, experimentation, and simple trial and error became the focus of the OPFOR. This process *led to tactics that relied more on maneuver and finesse than on firepower*. The concept of decision-point tactics for the OPFOR was developed through this training and learning process.

Decision-Point Tactics

Although not specifically titled decision-point tactics, the basic concept and technique of using decision points is embodied in our current Army doctrine. **Decision-point tactics, as defined by the OPFOR,** *"is the art and science of employing available means at a specific point in space and/or time where the commander anticipates making a decision concerning a specific friendly course of action. This decision is directly associated with threat force activity (action/reaction) and/or the battlefield environment."*
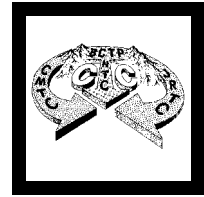
Decision-Point Tactics Imperatives

Conduct of decision-point tactics, like any other tactical technique, still requires good use of troop-leading procedures and proper execution. From the OPFOR perspective, there are four imperatives necessary to ensure the success of decision-point tactics. These imperatives are:

- ✔ **Battlefield Vision**
- ✔ **Successful Reconnaissance and Counter-Reconnaissance Operations**
- ✔ **Well-Trained Crews and Platoons**
- ✔ **Effective Deception Operations**

➜ *FIRST IMPERATIVE:* BATTLEFIELD VISION ←

The commander and his staff must have a shared vision of the battlefield throughout the conduct of the engagement. Besides continual experience in realistic combat-like conditions, the primary means of gaining battlefield vision is through the use of the Deliberate Decision-Making Process (DDMP) [1], *especially the wargaming portion.* From an OPFOR perspective, *the DDMP is an absolute necessity to understanding and visualizing the battlefield.* Through extensive wargaming, the OPFOR attempts to visualize all possible situations and subsequent reactions that it will face during an upcoming battle. Inclusion of all, or as many as possible, commanders and battlefield operating systems (BOSs) representatives is necessary *to gain a shared vision at all levels.* Because of our numerous rotations, the OPFOR gets to practice the DDMP repetitively. **This familiarity with planning allows the OPFOR to go beyond the science and achieve the art of planning tactical operations.** The key point is the *OPFOR* **always** *executes the DDMP and we consider it to be the primary means of gaining shared battlefield vision.* Summarized below are some of the more critical DDMP aspects.

A. *MTETT Analysis.* Although a full intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process is necessary, this relatively simple tool can summarize some of the more important considerations for decision-point tactics. *This analysis is critical for determining the basic conditions and norms used in the wargaming process.* Obviously, inaccurate analysis leads to invalid results. Therefore, analysis should include several alternatives and options and they all should include the enemy perspective. Some of the critical OPFOR considerations for each factor include:

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[1] OPFOR receives its initial warning order 45 days prior to execution. The warning order comes in the form of combat battle instructions (CBIs). The CBI outlines OPFOR missions, forces available and area of operations for every mission. This allows the OPFOR to do a full DDMP for each mission.
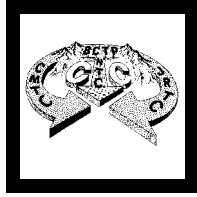
MISSION:

☛ *OFFENSE:* The critical factor is whether the mission is force or terrain oriented.

Force oriented: such as a *meeting battle.*

    Technique: develop decision points to *fix and destroy the enemy force*

Terrain oriented: such as an *attack against a defending enemy*

    Technique: develop decision points designed to
- ✮ **isolate the point of penetration**
- ✮ **attack at the weakest point**
- ✮ **seal the flanks**
- ✮ **seize the objective**

☛ *DEFENSE:* **Factors affecting decision points developed**

1. Normal requirement for the OPFOR to destroy all enemy forces.
2. Sector widths normally *two to three times larger than a doctrinal frontage.*
3. Concept of operation/scheme of maneuver using a maneuver or security style defense with a *destruction rather than a delay focus.*

    Technique: develop decision points designed to
- ✮ **trigger repositioning of forces**
- ✮ **commit reserves**
- ✮ **reconstitute reserves**
- ✮ **use special munitions**

TERRAIN: Although the terrain at NTC does not change, the OPFOR learns something new every time it fights. Therefore, it is *very important to completely review the impact of terrain on the battle, especially in terms of time and space*. For unit S2s, it is also important to note that from the new OPFOR perspective a *one vehicle-wide uncovered road over a mountain is a better maneuver corridor than a 15- km-wide valley covered by six-eight company teams.* The OPFOR can overcome terrain limitations if unopposed by enemy ground forces.
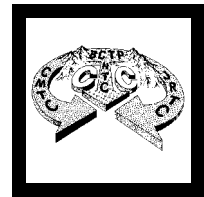
Significant terrain factors examined by the OPFOR:
- **identification of all possible maneuver routes**
- **identification of choke points**
- **identification of intervisibility lines**
- **advantages and disadvantages of each course of action**

The enemy is always considered when analyzing these factors.

ENEMY: This is *the most important factor and the hardest one to analyze*. Although the basic organization of the enemy force and some information on the enemy commanders and the enemy's training level can be determined before the wargame, most of our analysis of the enemy starts with the wargame and is then verified/denied on the battlefield. The OPFOR never intentionally underestimates any unit or commander. It also adjusts its tactics and decision points based on the conduct of the unit during a previous battle and/or rotation. For example, some units will move slowly and deliberately. Other units will move at a cavalry charge pace. Some units make an effort to dismount their infantry; others do not.   Some units have killer crews, platoons and companies. The unit training level, like its ability to execute battle drills, is also another critical factor that must be analyzed. When identified, these factors are fed into the decision-point determination process; normally the OPFOR will try and fix or maneuver away from more capable units. The NTC observer/controllers (O/Cs) do a good job of coaching units during the rotation so they do get better, and, as such, they will fight differently every battle. So *the OPFOR never stops analyzing and adjusting to our enemy.*

TIME: Analysis on different aspects of time is absolutely critical to proper decision-point determination.

Key OPFOR considerations:
- **movement times for both enemy and friendly forces on specific routes**
- **the impact of weather on the employment of special munitions such as smoke and chemical agents**
- **a realization of how long it takes to actually conduct a battle**

EXAMPLE: Most meeting battles take 5-8 hours, therefore giving units more than enough time for deliberate envelopment options.

Tactical patience is a key concept for the OPFOR.
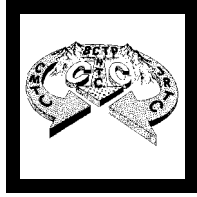
TROOPS: OPFOR units go through changes in personnel, training levels and equipment like any other unit. Additionally, the OPFOR is augmented by many different types of units that vary in training levels and expertise. Consequently, the OPFOR must take into consideration the capabilities and limitations of the units involved. Upgrades to OPFOR and BLUFOR battlefield training systems (e.g., MILES, SAWE) are in a state of flux and units are still attempting to determine the limitations and capabilities of these new systems. Future training system upgrades will continue to change this analysis. Therefore, units must fully understand the system that they are fighting. They also must remember that these new systems do not fully replicate the actual system's capabilities and limitations.

B. *Wargaming. This is the most important step of the DDMP.* Regardless of the number of battles the OPFOR fights, the next one will always be different. Therefore, extensive time and effort is placed into wargaming.

Techniques:
1. The decision points used in decision-point tactics are derived from wargaming.
2. The wargaming process takes the MTETT analysis and places it in a situation that fully incorporates enemy actions.
3. Incorporate commanders and specialty platoon leaders in the process.
4. Continue the wargaming process through the preparation and execution phases, as more information becomes available.

EXAMPLE: During one operation, OPFOR reconnaissance determined the enemy was defending completely differently than in any of the wargamed scenarios. The command group and TOC personnel promptly conducted a hasty wargame to determine the impact of these new dispositions on current courses of actions and decision points. Once changes were determined, it was easy to communicate these changes because the participating commanders had an initial point of reference from which to adjust their new plans. The battle was highly successful due to these adjustments, but more importantly from the full understanding and shared vision the subordinate commanders had of the changed battlefield.

RESULTS:
1. Most significantly, wargaming gives participants a better vision of the future battlefield.
2. Commanders at all levels are better able to relate battlefield events to some aspect of the wargame, and therefore understand the commander's intent for subsequent actions.
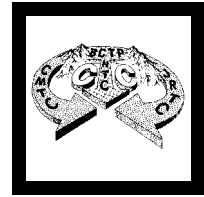
Procedures:

1. Commander provides planning guidance and initial acceptable risks to serve as a point of departure for the wargaming process.

> ***EXAMPLE:***
> a. preferred maneuver routes
> b. use of special munitions
> c. use of deception and commitment of forces to achieve it
> d. acceptable risk placing artillery forward to reach a specific target
> e. acceptable risk going through specific choke point, etc.

The wargame will examine the initial guidance and risks and determine if they need to be changed.

2. S2 develops, in advance, three to four potential enemy courses of action and all IPB products/overlays (e.g., route overlay with time and distance factors, intervisibility (I/V) line overlay, etc.)

3. The belt wargame technique is most common. The commander/S3 determines two to four areas in which a battle may be fought or zones of penetration and then wargames these areas in detail.

4. Action/reaction analysis with emphasis on determining ways to make the enemy react in the manner that will best support maneuver options. Put in terms of an OPFOR staff officer, "If we're going to dance, we want to lead."

> ***EXAMPLE:***
> a. using FASCAM/persistent chemical agents to shape the battlefield
> b. sending a fixing force to free up the main effort to maneuver, etc.
> c. Harmonize other BOSs with maneuver plan. Given all the potentially different courses of action, branches, and sequels, it is very difficult to synchronize all BOS options. Instead, the wargaming process attempts to maximize the use of other BOSs to cover more than one option.

> ***EXAMPLE:*** Placement of the persistent chemical agent to isolate two maneuver corridors supports options in both corridors. That way if the OPFOR attacks down one or the other, forces on either side will be isolated. In some cases, several BOSs may not be used because the risk to use them would outweigh their benefit for that particular COA.

5. Determine decision points for each course of action, branch, and sequel and the conditions that must exist to execute that option. ***Conditions for executing the option are essentially the criteria for choosing a particular decision point.***
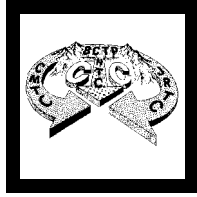
EXAMPLE: A decision to execute a COA to attack along the south wall of the central corridor has to meet the following conditions:

★ **the enveloping detachment has to be successful in securing Hill 760**

★ **no more than three enemy company teams are in a prepared defense on the south wall**

★ **John Wayne Pass is held or blocked by enemy forces**

★ **more than one company team is positioned to influence Alpha and Bravo passes in the Northern Corridor.**

Identification of the conditions necessary to execute a decision point is the essence of decision-point tactics.

C. *Planning Process Products.* From an OPFOR perspective, OPORDs, synchronization matrixes, decision matrixes (including decision-point conditions), and other staff organization tools are necessary evils. They capture the wargaming data and put it into a recognizable form that can be communicated to those not in attendance at the wargame. They also are very useful tools for the rehearsal process.

OPFOR orders are one or two pages long, are matrix in design, and have a cartoon sketch.

Unit SOPs cover most of the other administrative and operational areas. At the command post level, the most significant piece of information is the conditions identified to execute each COA. These are annotated on the TOC data boards and, as conditions are met, they are checked off. The TAC and Command Group also maintain this data. Synchronization/Decision matrixes are more detailed but are primarily used to assist other BOS representatives who need the detail to support maneuver operations. *Note: These matrixes must be as flexible as the maneuver plan.*

D. *Rehearsals. More emphasis is placed on rehearsals than on the actual order* itself, because most of the participants have an enhanced vision of the battle that was derived from the wargame.

Technique: As a decision point is reached during the rehearsal, the commander checks the conditions and makes a decision that generates the next phase of the rehearsal. The process is repeated for each COA.

RESULTS:

1. This ensures complete understanding for all commanders and staff on the conditions and subsequent actions.

2. Rehearsals, and backbriefs ensure that everyone understands his role in the plan and the critical decision points.
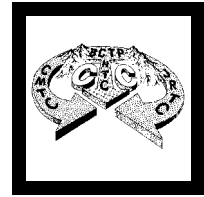
➜ *SECOND IMPERATIVE:* SUCCESSFUL RECONNAISSANCE/ COUNTER-RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS ← (Maintaining Battlefield Vision)

Without good reconnaissance, it would be impossible to execute decision-point tactics.

Techniques:

1. OPFOR reconnaissance uses NAIs, TAIs and all the other standard Army doctrinal planning techniques to produce the reconnaissance collection plan/counter-reconnaissance plan.

2. OPFOR scouts, who also participate in the wargaming process, know:
   ✯ **the operational concept, the decision-point criteria for their NAI.**
   ✯ **the commander's overall intent.**

3. If the battlefield doesn't look like the wargame, the scouts must make sure they communicate these changes back to the commander. In other words, key scout reports are linked to commander's decision points.

4. OPFOR scouts are also given the latitude to recommend changes in tactical employment.

5   OPFOR scouts and the Chief of Reconnaissance (S2) who collect the information can decipher what's important and what's not important for the commander's decision process, because they fully understand the commander's intent and operational concept and their role in it.

6. Since many of the decision points occur late into the actual execution of the battle, *the reconnaissance reporting process must be continuous.*

RESULT: Many OPFOR options occur based on how the enemy forces react either to OPFOR maneuver or deception operations. Clear identification of enemy reactions is critical to the execution of decision-point tactics. Therefore, OPFOR reconnaissance assets must be in-depth and reporting must be continuous.
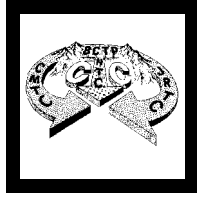
➜ *THIRD IMPERATIVE:* WELL-TRAINED CREWS AND PLATOONS ←

Technique: Decision-point tactics require decentralized execution, conducted by crews and platoons that can
1. react on short notice
2. execute simple battle drills
3. terrain navigate
4. report accurately
5. understand the plan, commander's intent and how to execute simple battle drills

OPFOR platoons gain full understanding, from the OPORD and subsequent *rehearsal*, of their role in *each of the different maneuver options.*

Without trained crews, platoons and companies: *No plan will be successful, and it will be impossible to execute decison point tactics.*

Many, if not all, BLUFOR units have excellent commanders and staffs that *develop plans* that match or even rival the OPFOR's. *The key difference in performance is the training level, which results in limited effectiveness of the crews, platoons and companies tasked to execute these plans.*

➜ *FOURTH IMPERATIVE:* EFFECTIVE DECEPTION OPERATIONS ⬅

The OPFOR must maximize it use of deception operations to give it that slight tactical edge necessary to be successful.

Technique: to achieve its deception goals
1. Reinforce the BLUFOR S2's most likely template.
2. Conduct good counter-reconnaissance operations.

EXAMPLE: of how the OPFOR deceives the BLUFOR
a. Commit up to an MRB maneuver force, artillery, CAS, EW and smoke assets to the deception effort.
b. During wargaming, the S2 highlights how BLUFOR dispositions correspond to possible OPFOR maneuver options.
c. Offensive operations:
★ **OPFOR reconnaissance confirms or denies BLUFOR dispositions, and, therefore, determines what the BLUFOR *thinks* is the *most likely OPFOR COA.***
★ **ALL OPFOR offensive COAs have options designed to specifically reinforce possible BLUFOR perceptions on OPFOR COAs.**
d. Defensive operations:
★ **Establish false/deception positions to portray a possible BLUFOR S2's Threat COA.**
★ **Establish an alternate defense: the real defense.**

RESULTS:
1. BLUFOR commanders are deceived just long enough about OPFOR intentions to gain that slight tactical edge necessary to win.
2. Often the BLUFOR commander commits his assets against unimportant targets.
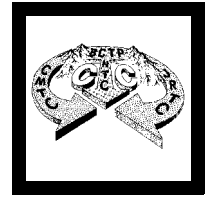
Football Analogy

The concept of decision-point tactics is comparable to a football team that runs the *wishbone offense*. For example, with the quarterback equaling the commander, when the QB first comes up to the line of scrimmage and *reads* the defense, this is his equivalent of reconnaissance. Then, after receiving the snap, the QB begins executing the play, with a series of inherent decisions points - knowing that the defense will change in reaction to the offensive maneuver.

> *EXAMPLE:* Decision Points:
> 1) give to the fullback or pull and run
> 2) continue down the line. . .pitch to the fullback, or keep it,. . .or
> 3) step back and pass

Each segment of the play's execution, against a dynamic enemy, requires the commander, the QB, to make decisions on the move. The success or failure of these decisions is critical to the success or failure of the play.
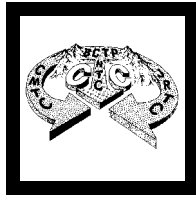
Risks of Decision-Point Tactics

There are always inherent risks when conducting operations against a potentially superior force.

Decision-point tactics increase these risks substantially because of decentralized execution, but then the chances of success are also enhanced. Although training and battlefield experience can reduce these risks, *the enemy is always the unknown factor and the most difficult to anticipate.* Therefore, OPFOR risk assessment focuses mainly on the enemy. Some of the most significant risks include:

✶ **Poor Decentralized Execution.**
✶ **Poor BOS Synchronization.**
✶ **Failure of the Enemy to React as Planned.**
✶ **Invalid Decision-Point Conditions.**
✶ **Rapid and flexible BLUFOR reaction.**
✶ **Well-Trained BLUFOR Crews and Platoons.** ✪

Chapter II: *APPLYING DECISION-POINT TACTICS TO THE OFFENSE*

    MISSION: 32d Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment attacks from the march 090700XXX96 to penetrate defending enemy forces and secure MRR objective vic NK6011 to facilitate the passage of follow-on divisional forces. (The OPFOR will attack at a 1.1: 1 ratio (OPFOR:BLUFOR).)

    TERRAIN ORIENTATION: Shown below are common NTC terrain feature names.

NTC TERRAIN ORIENTATION

CRASH
HILL

ECHO VALLEY

A & B
PASSES

GRANITE
PASS

K-BAR PASS

GOAT TRAIL

ARTILLERY
PIECE

BROWN PASS
& CUT

IRON TRIANGLE

RACE
TRACK

FLAG
POLE

DEBNAM PASS

HILL 800

HILL
876

HILL
780

HILL
760

HILL
720

WASH BOARD

PEANUT CHOD
HILL

HILL
824

HILL
781

BDE
HILL

HILL
899

HIDDEN VALLEY

JOHN WAYNE
PASS

SIBERIAN
RIDGE

RED LAKE
PASS

FT IRWIN

VOD

WHALE

MRR ATTACK COAs

COA 4 (A/B PASS)

COA 5 (K-BAR PASS)

COA 3 (NORTH WALL)

COA 1 (BASE PLAN)

COA 2 (JOHN WAYNE)
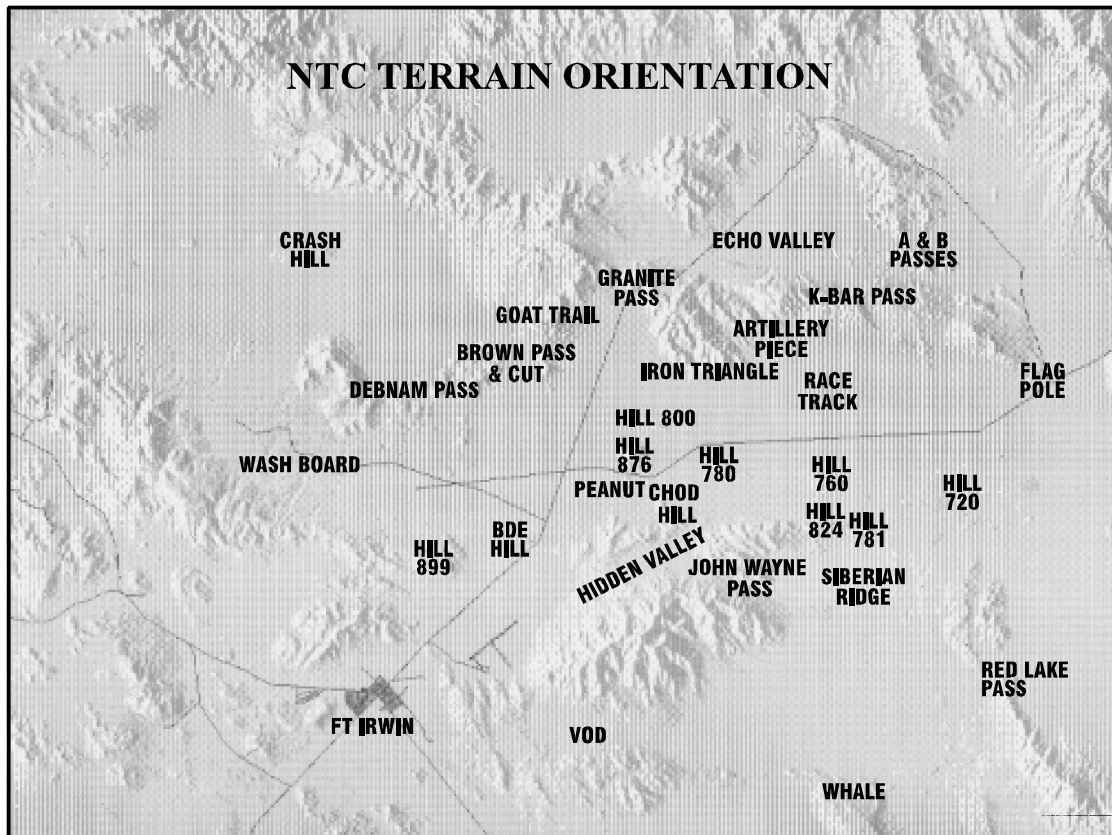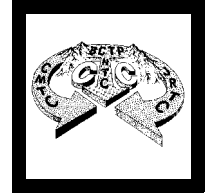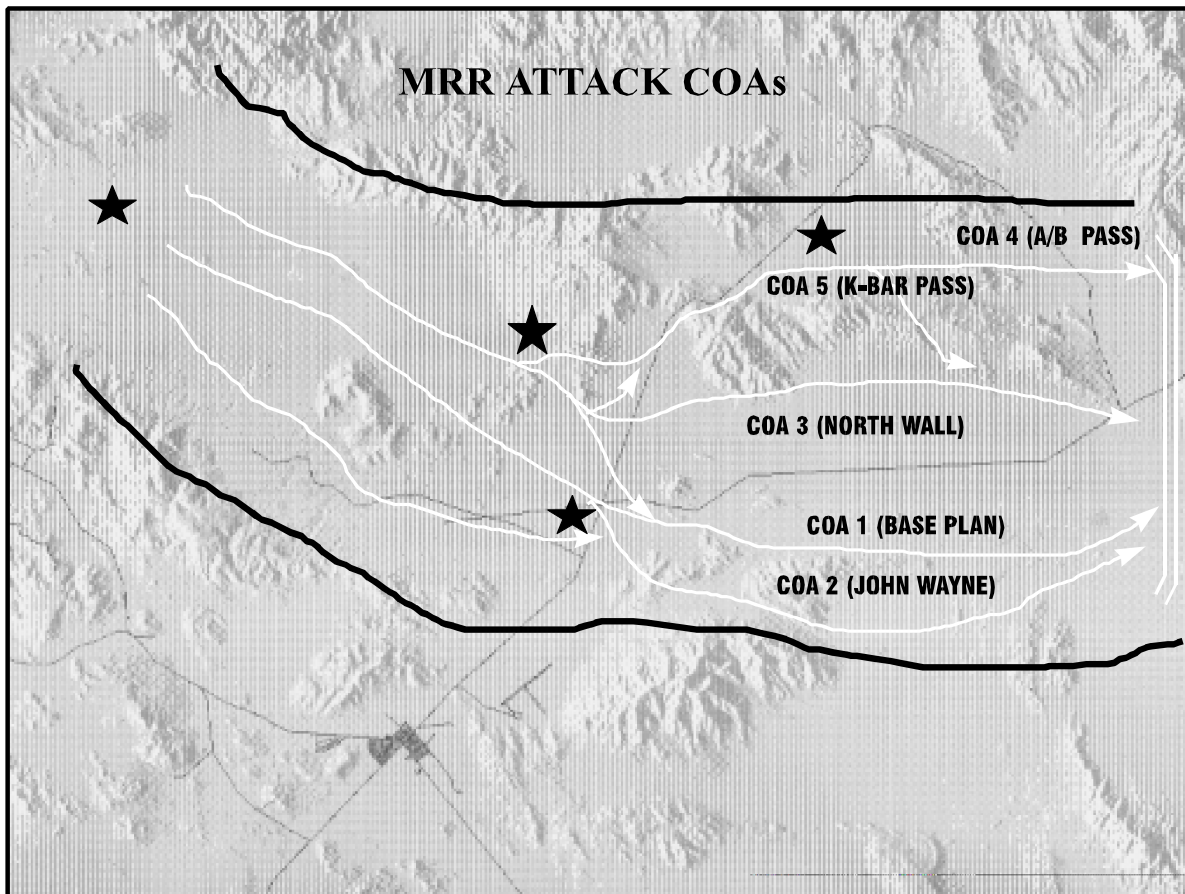
COA No. 1 (Base):

Task Force Destroyer LD's 081900XXX96 to seize Hill 899 (NK318088), Brigade Hill (NK353086) and Chod Hill (NK411104) to establish support by fire positions and facilitate passage of Advance Guard and Main Body forces.

Task Force Angel LZ vicinity John Wayne Foothills (NK481055), seizes Hill 824 (NK491093) and establishes support by fire positions oriented on Hill 760.

Advance Guard MRB attacks through Debnam Pass (NK302151) to the Peanut/Chod gap to destroy enemy forces, clear enemy obstacles, and seize Hill 780 (NK442118). Advance Guard MRB continues attacking east until combat ineffective.

Main Body MRB's attack abreast through Peanut/Chod gap and Peanut/Hill 876 gap, echelon right. Left side MRB (Supporting Effort) screens right side MRB (Main Effort) northern flank by seizing Hill 780 and Hill 760. Main effort MRB penetrates enemy forces along southern wall of central corridor and seizes MRR objective.

Anti-Tank Battalion (ATB) screens MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon MRB follows and assumes main effort or exploits main effort success.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 1:

✯ **No more than three company teams arrayed on the south wall of the central corridor.**

✯ **John Wayne Pass held or blocked by enemy forces.**

✯ **More than one company team that can influence Alpha and Bravo Passes in the northern corridor.**

COA No. 2 (John Wayne Pass Option):

Task Force Destroyer same as COA No. 1

Task Force Angel same as COA No. 1

Advance Guard same as COA No. 1
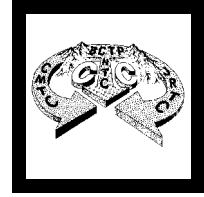
Main Body, Left side/northern MRB (Secondary Effort) attacks to reinforce Advance Guard at Peanut/Chod gap and enhances deception operations indicating a main attack along the south wall. On order disengages and follows main effort MRB through Hidden Valley, John Wayne Pass and over Siberian Ridge. Main Body, right side/southern MRB (Main Effort) attacks through Hidden Valley, John Wayne Pass, and over Siberian Ridge to seize MRR objective.

ATB screens MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon follows and assumes main effort.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 2:

✯ **John Wayne Pass clear of enemy forces and obstacles.**

✯ **Hidden Valley defended by less than one mechanized platoon.**

✯ **Strong enemy forces around Hill 876, Peanut/Chod and Hill 780.**

COA No. 3 (North Wall Option):

Task Force Destroyer attacks through the Goat Trail (NK363176) to secure Granite Pass and then continues the attack to destroy/fix enemy forces at the Iron Triangle (NK423162) and achieves the first point of penetration for the regiment.

Task Force Angel LZs vicinity the Worm Hole Pass at 081730XXX96 and establishes support by fire positions to fix/destroy enemy forces vicinity of the Artillery Piece and/or the Iron Triangle.

Advance Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass (NK337162) to the Iron Triangle to destroy or fix enemy forces. Continues attack through the Artillery Piece (NK443173) and Racetrack (NK463141) and continues east until combat ineffective.

Main body MRB's attack abreast through Brown Cut and Brown Pass, echelon left. Right side/south side MRB (Supporting Effort) screens left side/north side MRB (Main Effort) southern flank by seizing the Iron Triangle, Racetrack, and continues setting rolling firing lines to the east. Left side MRB (ME) penetrates high along the north wall of the central corridor and seizes the MRR objective.

ATB screens MRR southern flank.

2d Echelon follows and assumes main effort or exploits main effort success.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA 3:

✮ **No more than one company team at Iron Triangle/Artillery Piece.**

✮ **Brigade reserve south of Hill 720 or North of Range 23/Flagpole (NK598157).**

✮ **Two or more company teams defending in Echo Valley.**

✮ **Enemy forces strong (2-3 CO/TMs w/obstacles and prepared positions) around Hill 876, Peanut/Chod and Hill 780.**

COA No. 4 (Echo Valley/Alpha and Bravo Passes Option):

Task Force Destroyer same as COA No. 3 except it also assists in deception operations portraying a North Wall attack option.

Task Force Angel LZs same as COA No. 3 except it also assists in deception operations portraying a North Wall attack option.

Advanced Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass to the Iron Triangle to destroy or fix enemy forces. Establishes firing lines and secures Main Body's southern flank as it attacks through Granite Pass (NK407197) and penetrates through Alpha Pass. Reinforces deception effort to show a North Wall option.

Main Body MRB's attack abreast through the Brown Cut and Goat trail, echelon right. Right side/ Northern MRB (SE) leads through Granite Pass, attacks down Echo Valley, seizes firing lines to support by fire the assault through Alpha Pass by the ME MRB. If the pass is lightly or undefended, the lead MRB will penetrate and secure the eastern side to pass the ME MRB through to the MRR objective.

ATB initially screens MRR southern Flank. One ATC remains with Advance Guard, ATB (-) moves with Main Body and continues to screen its southern flank.

2d Echelon follows and assumes main effort or exploits main effort success.

Decision-Point Conditions for Executing COA No. 4.

✮ **No more than two company teams in northern corridor, including the Granite Pass area.**

✮ **No more than one company team that can influence Alpha Pass.**

✮ **Will accept light infantry battalion supported by no more than one tank platoon.**
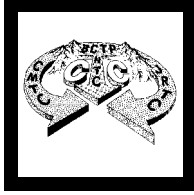
COA No. 5 (Echo Valley and K-Bar Pass (NK515196)):

Task Force Destroyer same as COA No. 3 except it also assists in deception operations portraying a North Wall attack option.

Task Force Angel LZs same as COA No. 3 except it also assists in deception operations portraying a North Wall attack option.

Advanced Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass to the Iron Triangle to destroy or fix enemy forces. Establishes firing lines and secures Main Body's southern flank as it attacks through Granite Pass (NK407197) and continues to fix forces until MRR breaks out from K-Bar Pass. Reinforces deception effort to portray a North Wall option.

Main Body MRB's Attack abreast through the Brown Cut and Goat trail, echelon right. Right side/Northern MRB (SE) leads through Granite Pass, attacks down Echo Valley, detaches one MRC to fix forces in Alpha Pass and deceives enemy forces as to focus of attack. Lead MRB(-) continues over K-Bar pass and secures exit of K-Bar Pass. ME MRB follows and continues attack to MRR object down central corridor.

ATB initially screens MRR southern Flank. One ATC remains with Advance Guard, ATB (-) moves with Main Body and continues to screen its southern flank.

2d Echelon follows and assumes main effort or exploits main effort success.

Decision-Point Conditions for Executing COA No. 5.

✫ **K-Bar Pass (a single vehicle road) is not blocked nor its exit guarded.**

✫ **No more than two company teams in northern corridor, including the Granite Pass area.**

✫ **More than one company team repositions to block Alpha and Bravo Pass.**
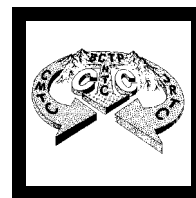
How Decision-Point Tactics Were Executed

● **FIRST Decision Point:** Division Reconnaissance reports during the defensive preparation indicated heavy defensive preparation along the southern wall vicinity of Hills 876, 780, 760. Reconnaissance identified seven of the eight company teams. Two teams in counter-reconnaissance positions east of Barstow road, four company teams working along the south wall and one company team working vicinity of the Iron Triangle. Hidden Valley and John Wayne Pass had a light infantry battalion preparing defenses in the area. Obstacles also blocked John Wayne Pass. There were no indications of work in the Echo Valley and only a tank platoon was identified behind Alpha and Bravo Passes. Based on this read, the commander eliminated COA No. 2 as a viable option. COA No. 1 was now an unlikely option; however, the final decision would rest on further enemy preparations and dispositions. The commander's first major decision point was now made to divert TF Angel to its northern LZ near the Worm Hole Pass and TF Destroyer was sent to secure Granite Pass and assist the Advance Guard at the Iron Triangle. Regimental Reconnaissance was then focused to confirm or deny northern option criteria.

DIVISION RECON READ
(COA 2–JOHN WAYNE ELIMINATED)

KEY
PREPARED POSITIONS
ABOVE-GROUND MOBILE POSITIONS
OBSTACLES
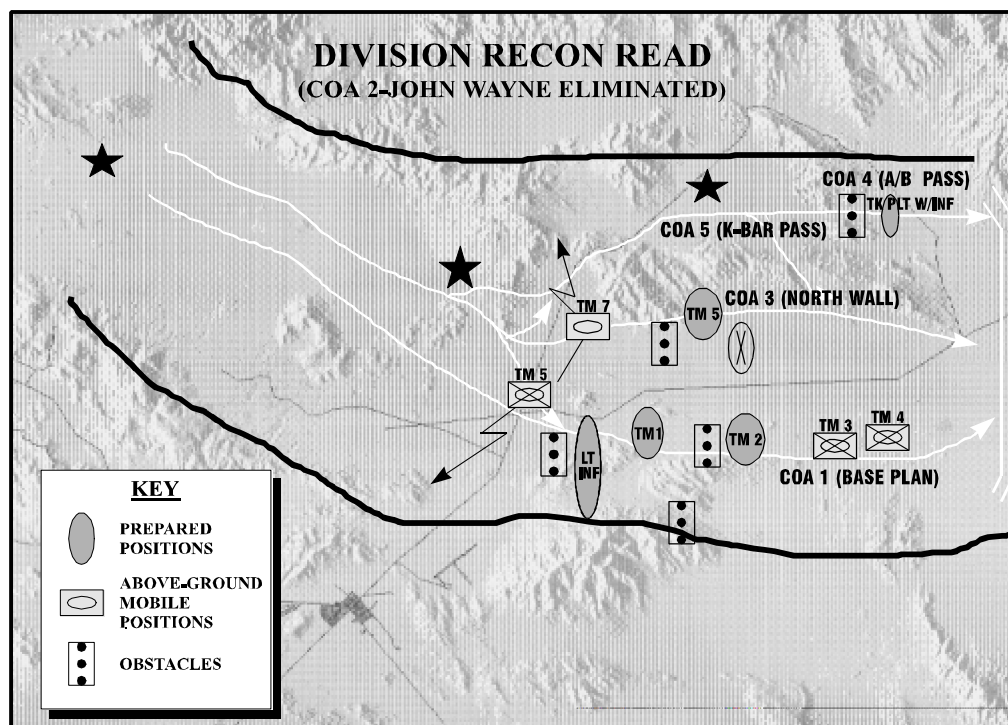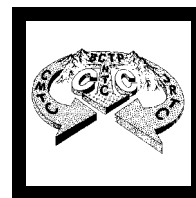
● **SECOND Decision Point (MRB Level):** The first light read identified the light infantry battalion in a prepared defense in Hidden Valley and the Peanut/Chod gap. The infantry was backed up by a dug-in company team (TM 1) vicinity hill 780. Another company team (TM 2) was identified in defensive positions vicinity forward slope of hill 760. Two more company teams (TMs 3 and 4) were located behind hill 760. One company team was located at the Artillery Piece (TM 5) but TF Angel had been successful in inflicting about 50-percent losses to this unit. Another company team (TM 6) was positioned behind the Race Track. A tank team (TM 7) was located at the exit of the Passage to India (NK547165) on the north wall, but this was east of K-Bar pass. The brigade tank reserve (TM 8) was positioned center of sector behind hill 720. One tank platoon was still located behind Alpha and Bravo Passes. TF Destroy had also been successful in securing Granite Pass and was currently working its way around the Iron Triangle. At this point, the second commander's decision point was met. COA No. 1 was no longer an option. COA No. 3 was less likely given the three company teams along the north wall. However, the final decision on COA No. 3 would be made based on the enemy's reaction to the MRR's Advance Guard force.

REGT RECON FIRST LIGHT READ
(COA 1-BASE PLAN ELIMINATED)
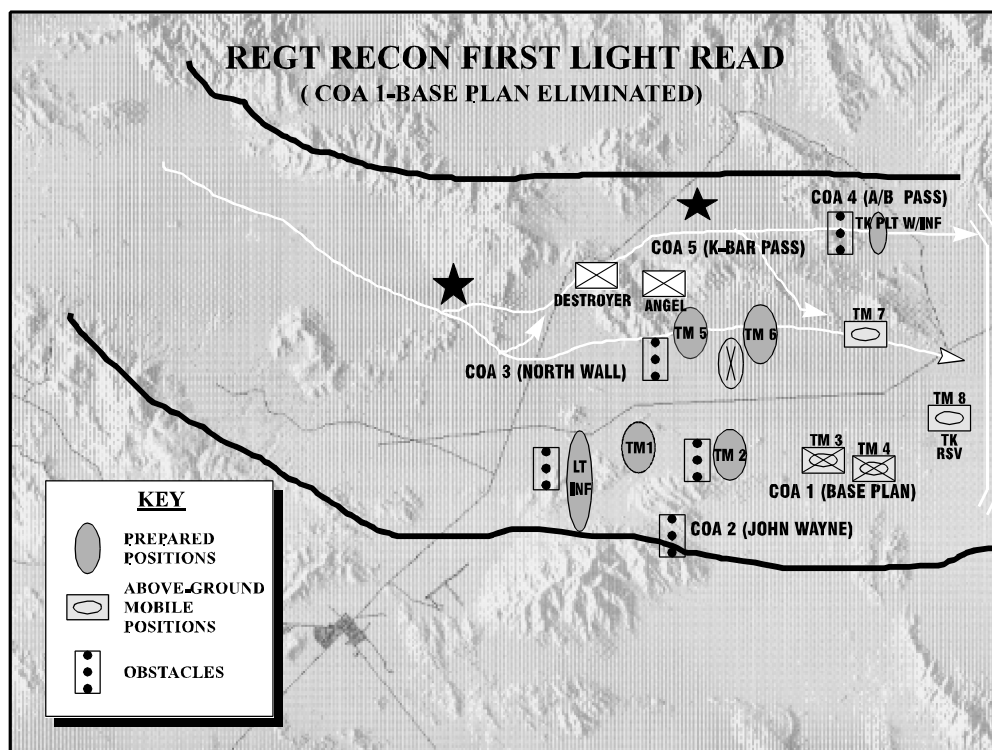
● **THIRD Decision Point:** As the regiment was moving toward Brown Pass, TM 3 repositioned and eventually assumed defensive positions vicinity of the Race Track. Based on this move, the third commander's decision point was met, eliminating COA No. 3. The OPFOR executed COA No. 4, with the final decision being based on repositioning of enemy forces vicinity Alpha Pass.

REGT LD'S MOVES TO BROWN PASS
(COA3-NORTH WALL ELIMINATED)

COA 4 (A/B PASS)
TK PLT W/INF

COA 5 (K-BAR PASS)

DESTROYER
DESTROYER

TM 5   TM 6   TM 7

TM 8
TK RSV

TM 1   TM 2   TM 3   TM 4

LT INF

KEY

PREPARED POSITIONS

ABOVE-GROUND MOBILE POSITIONS

OBSTACLES

MRR
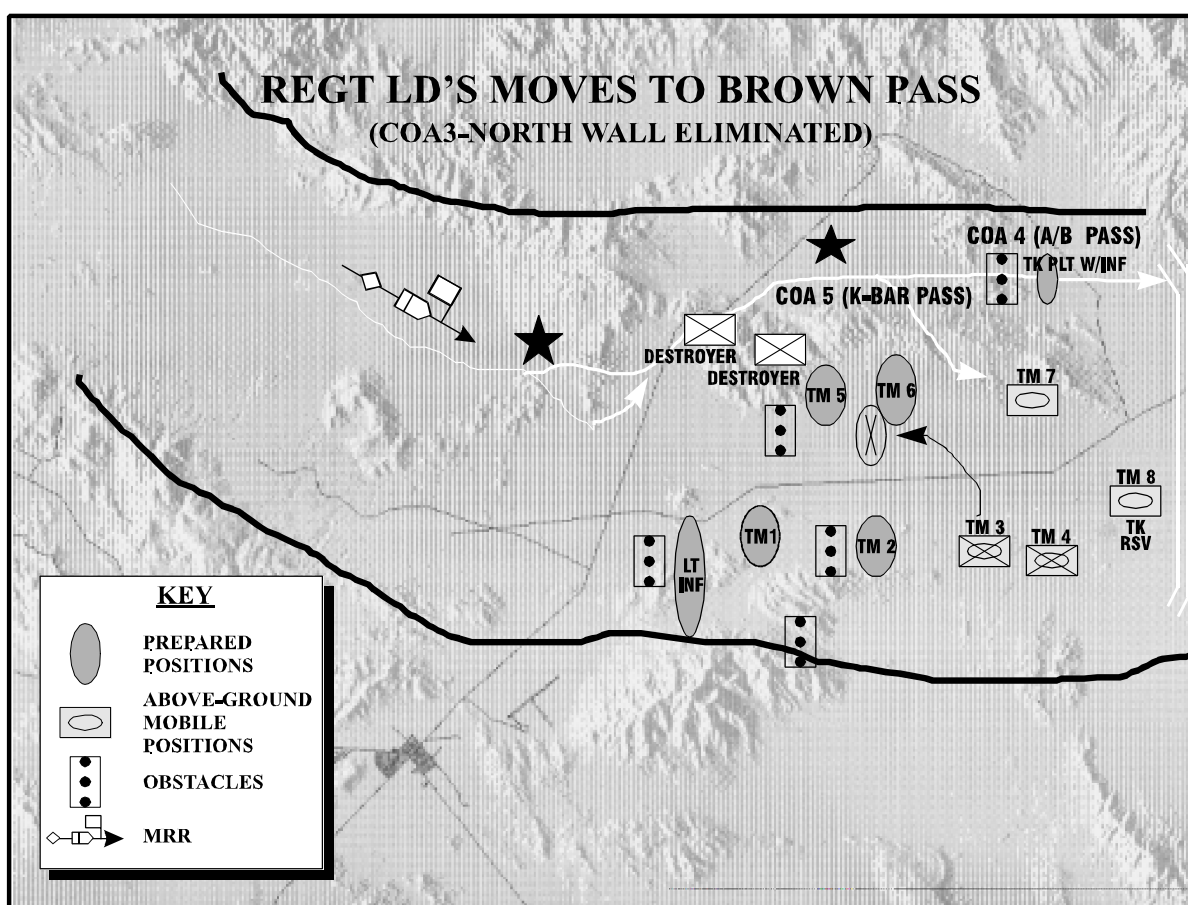
● **FOURTH AND FINAL Decision Point:**   As the Advance Guard began to destroy TM 5 and fix TMs 3 and 6, the main body committed through Granite Pass. In apparent reaction to this maneuver, TMs 4 and 8 were seen repositioning toward Alpha Pass. Their repositioning was being slowed by the persistent chemical dropped at the Flag Pole with the intent of separating the two corridors. At this point, the commander made the final decision to execute COA No. 5 and attack back over the Granite Mountains into the central corridor.

REGT COMMITS TO ECHO VALLEY
(COA 4-A&B PASS ELIMINATED)

COA 4 (A/B PASS)

COA 5 (K-BAR PASS)

TK PLT W/INF

DESTROYER   ANGEL

TM 7

TM 5   TM 6

TM 3

TM 8

TM1   TM 2

TM 4   TK
RSV

LT
INF

KEY

PREPARED
POSITIONS

ABOVE-GROUND
MOBILE
POSITIONS

OBSTACLES

MRR   MRB
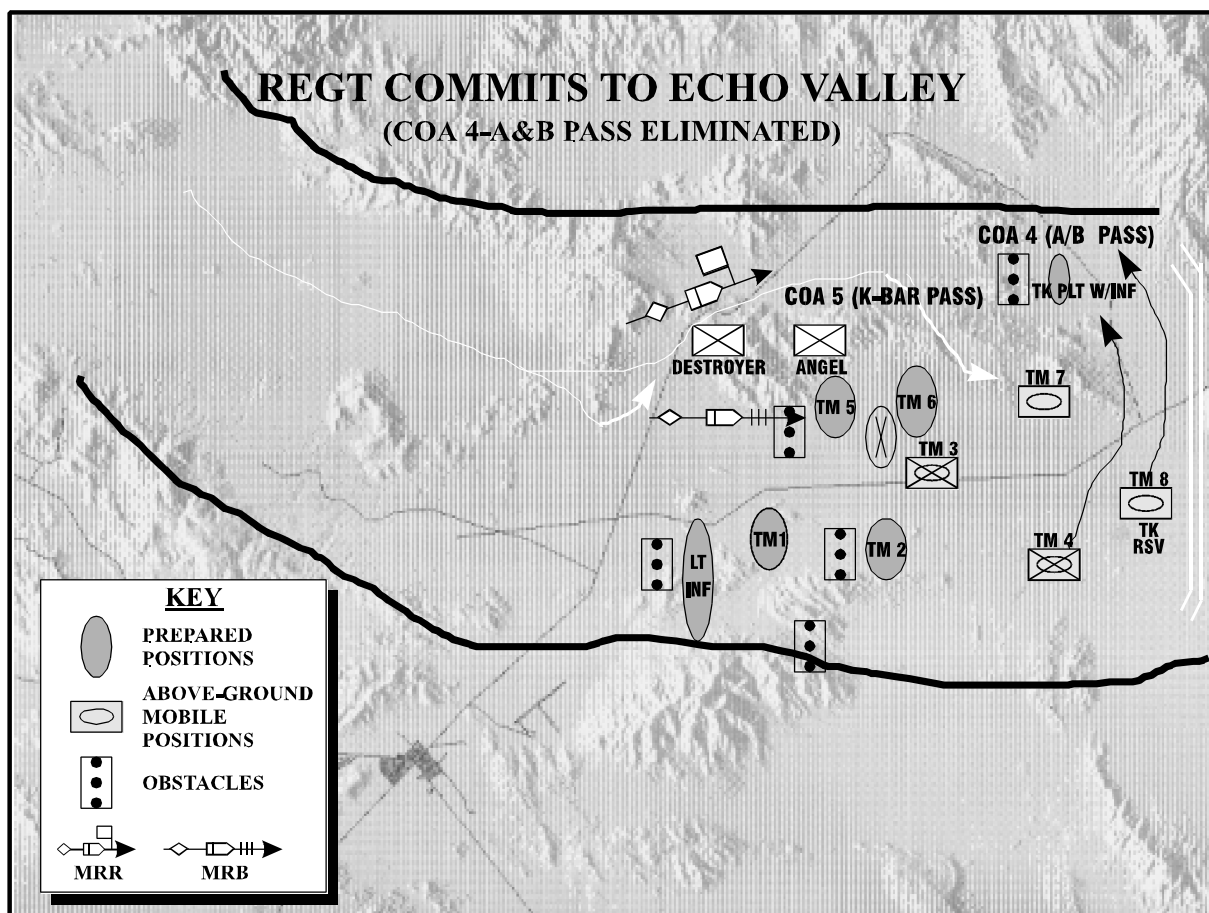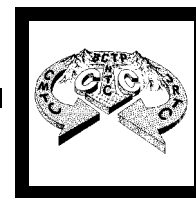
MRB EXECUTION: At this point, the execution of the operation was turned over to the MRB commanders with the regimental CP supporting the operations with fires and other BOS systems. Endstate, the regiment successfully attacked over K-Bar pass, destroying TM 7 at the Passage to India, secured the objective, and destroyed repositioning units from behind Alpha Pass.
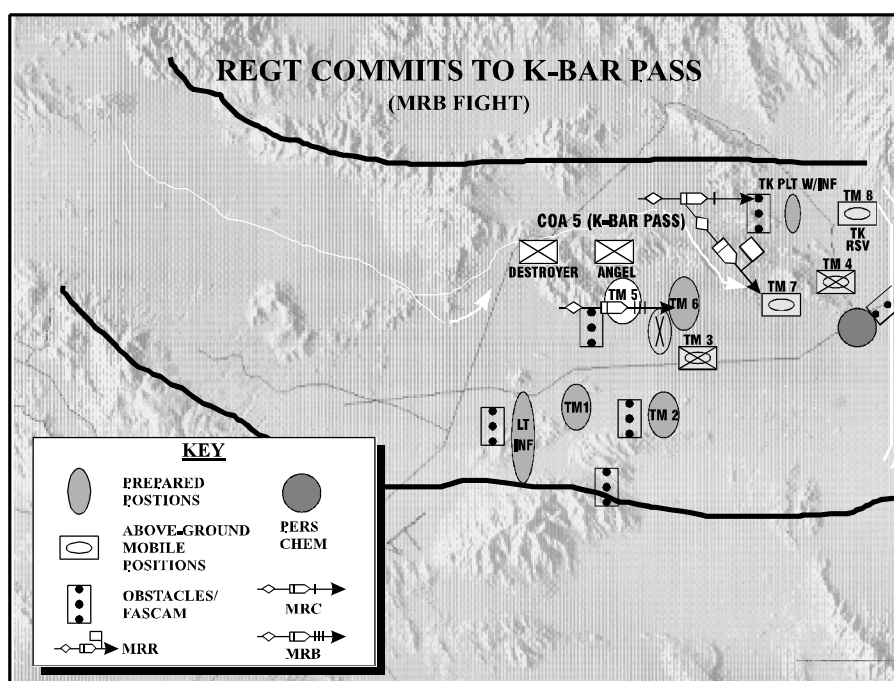
SUMMARY: Decision-point tactics is neither unique nor new. From the OPFOR perspective, it is the primary means to achieve success on a rapidly changing battlefield. The essence of decision-point tactics is a flexible plan that focuses on enemy actions and reactions. There are four imperatives to the successful execute of decision-point tactics.

Imperative 1: A unit most have good battlefield vision to clearly identify the conditions necessary to execute a specific decision.

Imperative 2: A unit must have a successful reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance operation to determine if the conditions have been met and to deny its intentions to the enemy.

Imperative 3: A unit must have well-trained crews and platoons to conduct decentralized execution.

Imperative 4: A unit must execute effective deception operations to cause the enemy to waste time and resources. There are also inherent risks involved with executing decision-point tactics. The most critical factor is the enemy. Accomplishing these imperatives while minimizing the risks is essential to executing decision-point tactics.✪
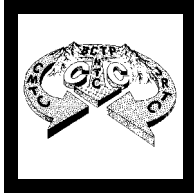
Chapter III: *APPLYING DECISION-POINT TACTICS TO THE MEETING BATTLE*
(Fighting the Enemy. . .Not the Plan)

Given the four Decision-Point tactics imperatives previously discussed, let's apply them specifically to a Meeting Battle. With the general background already provided, this subsequent discussion and examples will highlight aspects of each imperative specific to the Meeting Battle.

➜ *FIRST IMPERATIVE:* BATTLEFIELD VISION ←

1. Remember, the *primary means of gaining battlefield vision is through the use of the Deliberate Decision-Making Process (DDMP).* [1]

2. From the OPFOR perspective, *the meeting battle is the simplest operation to plan and execute.* It is nothing more than a *regimental battle drill* that is completely oriented on finding and destroying enemy forces.

A. *MTETT Analysis:* While a full Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) process is necessary, the relatively simple MTETT analysis can summarize some of the more important considerations for decision-point tactics during a meeting battle.

OPFOR considerations for each factor of MTETT:

MISSION: the meeting battle is *force oriented*. The OPFOR develops decision points to *fix and destroy the enemy force.* ALL maneuver options are specifically geared to *enemy formations and their maneuver options.*

TERRAIN: considerations relative to time and space that are *critical to success.*
* ✯ identification of *when and where initial contact will take place*
* ✯ **location of the subsequent main battle area**
* ✯ **identification of all possible maneuver routes**
* ✯ **identification of choke points**
* ✯ **identification of intervisibility lines**
* ✯ **determine the impact of weather on the employment of** *special munitions,* **such as smoke and chemical agents**
* ✯ *most important*, **identification of** *key terrain features that could assist in fixing and then enveloping enemy forces*

The OPFOR visualizes these areas and then determines how to make the best use of the terrain to destroy the enemy.
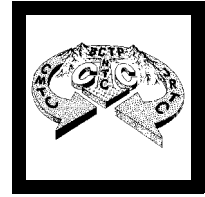
How the *enemy will use this same terrain* is always considered when analyzing these factors.

ENEMY: THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR and during the meeting battle, *one of the easier factors to analyze.*

★ **like the OPFOR, the BLUFOR has a set doctrine advocating leading with the smallest force possible to facilitate main body maneuver options.**

★ **the BLUFOR** *normally* **moves with an advance guard company/team and one task force up and another task force back.**

★ **NOTE: some BLUFOR units attack with two task forces abreast, normally in an attempt to assume a hasty defense.** *This formation is easily identified, and, therefore, easier to defeat.* **By coming two abreast, the units are** *easily fixed***. Once fixed, they lose their maneuver options, thus** *surrendering the initiative to the OPFOR.*

★ **Knowing BLUFOR formations simplifies the decision process,** *since key decision points are triggered* **based on the maneuver of specific BLUFOR units.**

★ **The OPFOR tries to quickly determine the BLUFOR unit's level of training, specifically** *their ability to execute battle drills.*

★ **The BLUFOR commander is the** *hardest element to analyze***, and it takes a few battles before the analysis is complete. Factors considered:**

☞ **the ability to make quick decisions**
☞ **the ability to communicate those decisions to subordinates**
☞ **preferred tactics**
☞ **aggressiveness**

The OPFOR always recognizes that *enemy actions will and do influence the way the OPFOR fights.* On the battlefield, the enemy always gets a vote.

TIME: factors to consider:

★ **movement times for both enemy and friendly forces** *on specific routes*
★ **employment times of special munitions, such as smoke and chemical agents**
★ *most important:* **how long it actually takes to conduct a battle**

EXAMPLE: most meeting battles take 5-8 hours, giving units more than enough time to execute an envelopment of the enemy's main body.

Tactical patience is a key concept for the OPFOR.
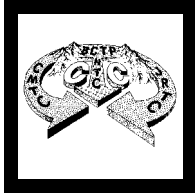
TROOPS:

1. The OPFOR goes through changes in personnel, training levels and equipment, like any other unit. Additionally, the OPFOR is routinely augmented by many different types of units that *vary in training levels and expertise.*

2. Upgrades to OPFOR and BLUFOR battlefield training systems, e.g., MILES II, SAWE, etc., are in a state of flux, and units are still attempting to determine the limitations and capabilities of these new systems. Future upgrades will keep equipment in a state of flux. Units must work hard to fully understand the systems they are fighting and employing.

3. Units must always remember these new systems *do not fully replicate the actual system's capabilities and limitations.*

Other aspects of analysis:

B. *Wargaming:* A meeting engagement involves *two moving forces.* Therefore, identification of the *exact location* of where the battle will be fought is critical. To compensate for this uncertainty, the OPFOR wargames using the *belt technique* and uses movement timelines to determine *three likely zones of battle:*
    ✯ **base: the expected zone of battle**
    ✯ **deep**
    ✯ **short**

MTETT analysis assists in this process. The initial decision point is based on the *most likely zone where the battle will occur.*

C. *Rehearsals:* **MORE EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON REHEARSALS THAN ON THE ACTUAL OPORD ITSELF.** Well-conducted rehearsals ensure that everyone understands his role in the plan and the critical decision points for each course of action. Each potential zone of battle is rehearsed in preparation for the meeting battle.

➜ *SECOND IMPERATIVE:* SUCCESSFUL RECONNAISSANCE/ COUNTER-RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS ⬅
(Maintaining Battlefield Vision)

Without good reconnaissance, *it would be impossible to execute decision-point tactics.*
    ✯ **The regimental reconnaissance normally "owns" the first decision point, which is the identification in which zone the battle will occur.**
    ✯ **Since subsequent decision points occur** *throughout the actual execution of the battle,* **the reconnaissance reporting is** *continuous.* ***EXAMPLE:*** Because both forces are maneuvering, it is absolutely critical that reconnaissance assets identify how the enemy forces react either to OPFOR maneuver or to deception operation.
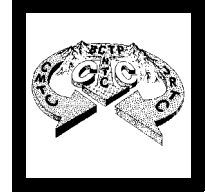
➜ *THIRD IMPERATIVE:* WELL-TRAINED CREWS AND PLATOONS ←

Decision-point tactics, *especially during meeting battles,* require decentralized execution. To successfully achieve decentralized execution, every unit must have crews and platoons that can:
- ✮ **react on short notice**
- ✮ **execute simple battle drills**
- ✮ **terrain-navigate**
- ✮ **report accurately**

The OPFOR's success in executing meeting battle maneuver doctrine is *based primarily on its well-trained crews and platoons.*

➜ *FOURTH IMPERATIVE:* EFFECTIVE DECEPTION OPERATIONS ←

During the meeting battle, the ability to deceive *is only necessary for a short period of time.*

Deception Goal: to deceive the opposing commander about what element he is fighting (e.g., CRPs, FSE, AGMB, main body, etc.).

  Technique: To achieve this goal, the OPFOR employs the following:
- ✮ **deceptive radio traffic**
- ✮ **separation times/distances between maneuver units (within doctrine constraints)**
- ✮ **smoke**

Lack of BLUFOR understanding of the *number and type of vehicles in each maneuver element* contributes to the OPFOR's successful deception.

EXAMPLE: The BLUFOR advance guard company may believe it has destroyed the FSE and is now fixing the OPFOR advanced guard main body. In reality, it has only destroyed the CRPs, and is fixing the FSE.

RESULT: This allows the OPFOR AGMB and 1st echelon to maneuver freely to envelop the lead and trail BLUFOR task forces.
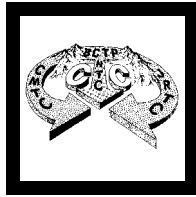
Example Decision-Point Tactics Battle (Meeting Battle Scenario)

MISSION: 32d Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment attacks from the march 090700XXX96 to destroy enemy forces and secure MRR objective vic NK5815 to facilitate the passage of follow-on divisional forces.

TERRAIN ORIENTATION: Shown below are common NTC terrain feature names.

NTC TERRAIN ORIENTATION
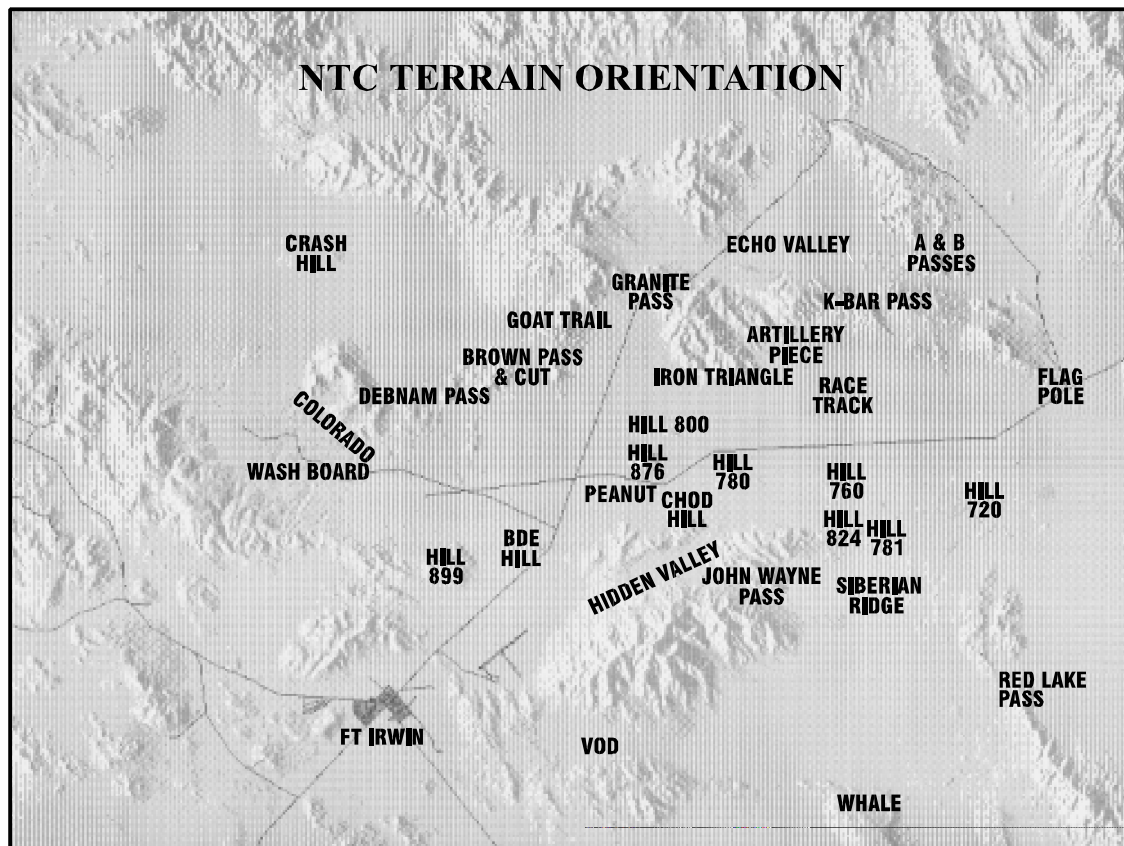
ENEMY COURSES OF ACTION: The wargame templated three basic BLUFOR courses of actions (COAs). COA 1- Brigade attacks with one task force leading; second task force follows and maneuvers north or south of the lead task force. COA 2 - Brigade attacks with one task force leading; second task force commits along the same avenue as the lead task force. COA 3 - Brigade attacks with two task forces abreast.

CONCEPT: The basic maneuver concept is simple. The MRR attacks in the advance guard formation. The forward security element (FSE) moves, finds and destroys the advance guard company/team. The advanced guard main body (AGMB) moves, finds and defeats the lead task force. Upon commitment of the 2d task force, the main body MRBs maneuver to the opposite flank to envelop and destroy the 2d task force and forces remaining in the first task force. The 2d echelon MRB (-) can reinforce the FSE, AGMB, main body, or continue the attack to secure the regimental objective. Decision points are developed to facilitate these maneuver options.

MRR MEETING BATTLE COA
(REGT MOVEMENT FORMATIONS
W/ROUTE & ZONE OPTIONS)

MAIN BODY
& 2ND ECH

ZONE 1

ZONE 2

ZONE 3

10-20 km
(30-60 min)

AGMB

REGT RECON

REGT RECON

FSE

CRP

5-10 km
(15-30 min)

REGT RECON

CRP

5-10 km
(30-45 min)

FLANK
SECURITY

CRP

REGT RECON

REGT RECON

UP TO 50 km
but at NTC normally
posted throughout sector

KEY

MRR

MRB

MRC

MRP

RECON GRP

Courses of Action (COAs)

COA No. 1 (Base Plan-Zone 2)

Advance Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation Hill 780/ Iron Triangle (NK423162) to fix and destroy the lead task force. On order, facilitates passage of the main body and assists in the destruction in the second task force. Assists deception effort by dispersing and portraying the main body.

Main Body

Option North: MRB attacks abreast through Brown Pass(NK337162) with an attack orientation to Iron Triangle (NK423162), Artillery Piece (NK443173) and Racetrack (NK463141) echelon right. Right side (south) MRB (Supporting Effort) guards left side (north) MRB (Main Effort) southern flank by seizing firing lines and attriting 2d task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys 2d task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Option South: MRB attacks abreast through Debnam Pass (NK302151) with an attack orientation to Peanut/Chod/ Hill 876, Hill 780, Hill 760 echelon left. Left side (north) MRB (Supporting Effort) guards right side MRB (Main Effort) northern flank by seizing firing lines and attriting 2d task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys 2d task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Anti-Tank Battalion (ATB)

Option North: guards MRR southern flank.

Option South: guards MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon MRB follows and assumes main effort or reinforces FSE or AGMB. On order, exploits main effort success.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 1:
- ✯ **Battle zone will occur vicinity Hill 876,780 and Iron Triangle.**
- ✯ **Option North: 2d task force attacks along the south wall.**
- ✯ **Option South: 2d task force attacks along the north wall.**
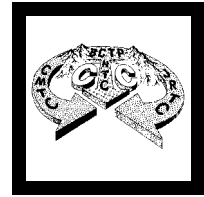
COA No. 2 (Deep - Zone 3)

Advance Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation Hill 780/Artillery Piece (NK443173) to fix and destroy the lead task force. On order, facilitates passage of the main body and assists in the destruction in the second task force. Assists deception effort by dispersing and portraying the main body.

Main Body

Option North: MRB attacks abreast through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation to Iron Triangle (NK423162), Artillery Piece (NK443173) and Racetrack (NK463141) echelon right. Right side (south) MRB (Supporting Effort) guards left side MRB (Main Effort) southern flank by seizing firing lines and attriting 2d task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys 2d task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Option South: MRB attacks abreast through Debnam Pass (NK302151) with an attack orientation to Peanut/Chod/Hill 876, Hill 780, Hill 760, Hill 720 echelon left. Left side (north) MRB (Supporting Effort) guards right side MRB (Main Effort) northern flank by seizing firing lines and attriting 2d task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys 2 task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Anti-Tank Battalion (ATB)

Option North: guards MRR southern flank.

Option South: guards MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon MRB follows and assumes main effort or reinforces FSE or AGMB. On order, exploits main effort success.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 2:

✯ **Battle zone will occur vicinity Hill 760 and Race Track.**

✯ **Option North: 2d task force attacks along the south wall.**

✯ **Option South: 2d task force attacks along the north wall.**

COA No. 3 (Short-Zone 1)

Advance Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation Brigade Hill (NK353086), Chod Hill (NK411104), to fix and destroy lead task force. On order, facilitates passage of main body and assists in the destruction in the second task force. Assists deception effort by dispersing and portraying the main body.

Main Body

Option North: MRB attacks abreast through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation to Iron Triangle (NK423162), Artillery Piece (NK443173) and Racetrack (NK463141) echelon right. Right side (south) MRB (Supporting Effort) guards left side MRB (Main Effort) southern flank by seizing firing lines and attriting 2d task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys 2d task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Option South: MRB attacks abreast through Debnam Pass (NK302151) with an attack orientation to Brigade Hill, Peanut/Chod/Hill 876, Hill 780, Hill 760 echelon left. Left side (north) MRB (Supporting Effort) guards right MRB (Main Effort) northern flank by seizing firing lines and attriting 2d task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys 2d task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.
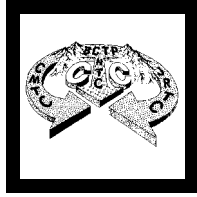
Anti-Tank Battalion (ATB)

Option North: guards MRR southern flank.

Option South: guards MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon MRB follows and assumes main effort or reinforces FSE or AGMB. On order, exploits main effort success.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 3:

✫ **Battle zone will occur vicinity Brigade Hill, Hill 876 and Iron Triangle.**

✫ **Option North: 2d task force attacks along the south wall.**

✫ **Option South: 2d task force attacks along the north wall.**

How Decision-Point Tactics Were Executed

● **FIRST Decision Point:** Division Reconnaissance reported that the advance guard company/team and lead task force moved west, centered up and would make contact with the FSE vicinity zone 2. Given the enemy's rate of march, they could reach Hill 876/IronTriangle before the FSE. Based on this information, the regimental commander made the decision to execute COA No. 2. Additionally, the regimental commander fired persistent chemical agents, nonpersistent chemical agents, smoke, and FASCAM to delay the lead task force and allow the FSE to secure initial firing lines vicinity Hill 876/Iron Triangle. Additionally, the special munitions forced the brigade to commit either north or south, giving an early lead. Regimental Reconnaissance then focused on confirming or denying the northern or southern option criteria.

REGT RECON IDs BLUFOR ADV GD
(Regt Cdr Employs Special Munitions)

FSE

ZONE 2

CRP

CRP

CRP

REGT RECON

REGT RECON

REGT RECON

LEAD TF

ADV GDE CO/TM

REGT RECON

REGT RECON

KEY

○──►   RECON GRP

◇─□╫─►   MRC

▭   BLUFOR UNIT

▯   FASCAM

●   PERS CHEM
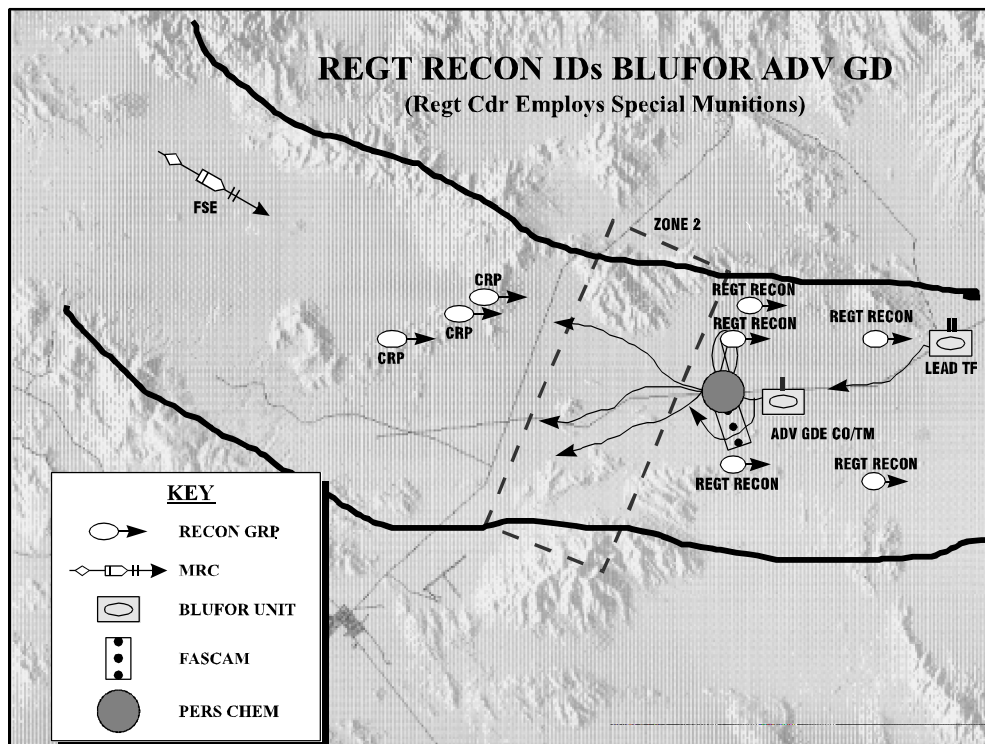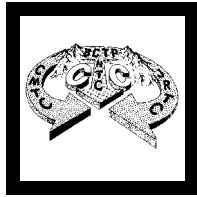
● **SECOND Decision Point (MRB Level):**   Regimental reconnaissance reported the lead tank heavy team had committed south toward Hill 780/876. The advanced guard's center CRP made contact with the BLUFOR advance guard team vic Hill 780/876. The center CRP then established firing lines vicinity Hill 876 and attempted to fix the lead team. The northern and southern CRPs continued to maneuver along the north and south walls to find the flanks of the lead team and the remainder of the first task force. The MRB commander then committed his FSE to Hill 876 and oriented the AGMB to Hill 800 and the Iron Triangle.

CRPs MAKE CONTACT W/ADV GD CO/TM

KEY

FIRING LINE	BLUFOR UNITS
FASCAM	RECON GRP
PERS CHEM	MRP
	MRC
	MRB
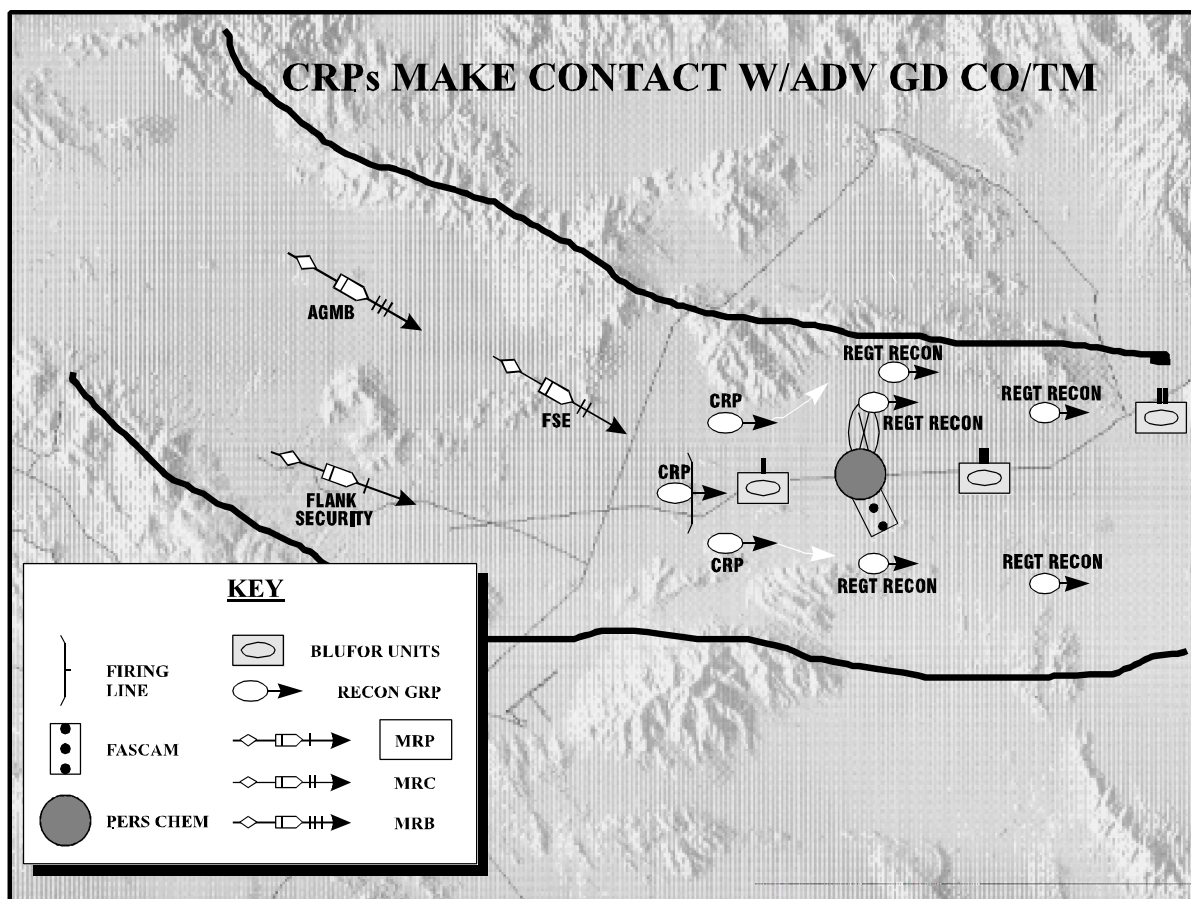
● **THIRD Decision Point (MRB Level):**   The regimental reconnaissance reported that the lead task force (which was delayed by the special munitions) had committed south to reinforce their advance guard team. The second task force was North of Hill 720 still centered up and had not committed north or south. The FSE had defeated the lead team and was fixing the lead task force. The MRB commander then committed the AGMB to envelop the lead task force from the north vicinity Hill 800 and the Iron Triangle. The MRB commander also committed an MRC to vicinity of the Artillery piece to secure his northern flank in case the second task force committed north. The regimental commander slowed the main body forces to prevent their early commitment prior to the BLUFOR commitment of the second task force.

FSE/AGMB – LEAD TF FIGHT
Adv Gd Co/Tm Defeated

MRR

AGMB

CRP

REGT RECON

FSE

CRP

REGT RECON

FLANK
SECURITY

KEY

BLUFOR UNITS

FIRING LINE

FASCAM

PERS CHEM

RECON GRP

MRP

MRC

MRB

MRR
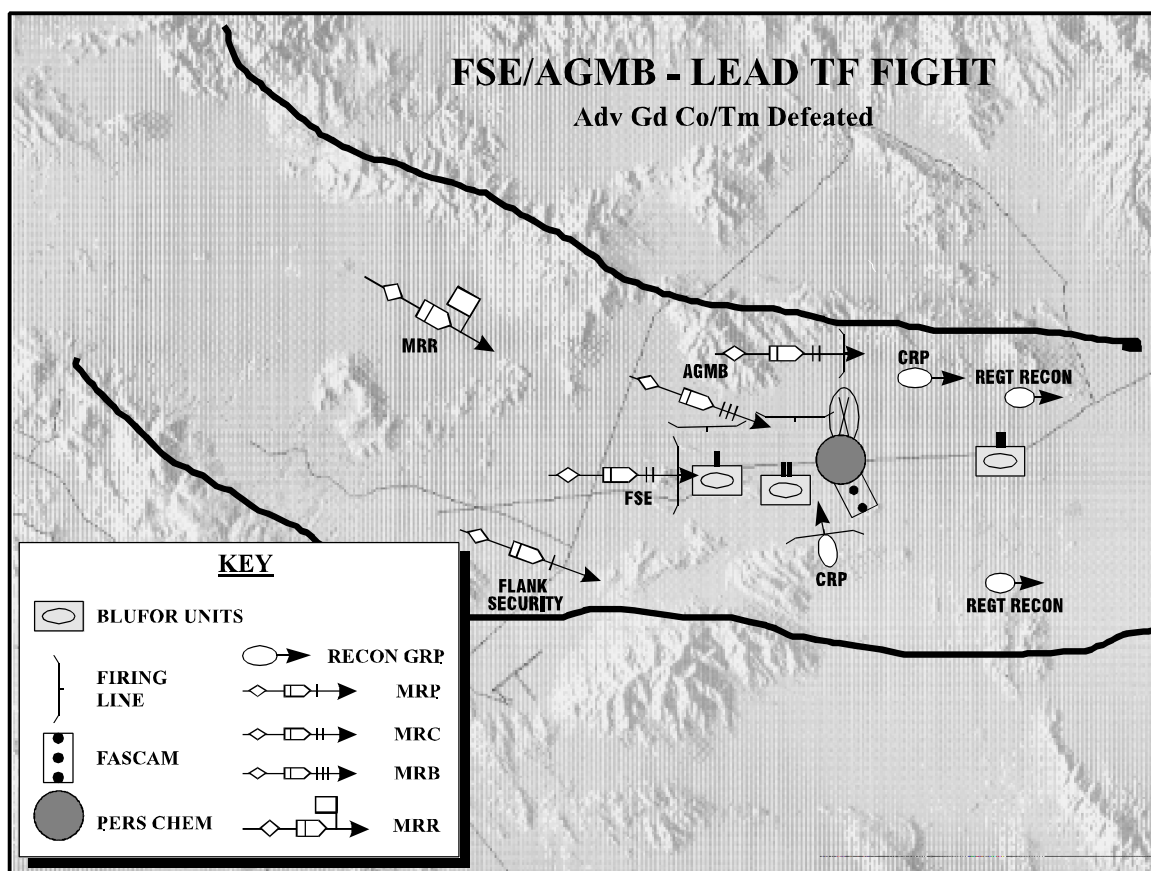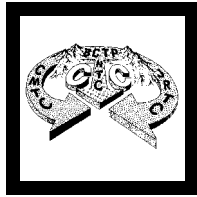
● **FOURTH AND FINAL Decision Point (MRR Level):**   The regimental reconnaissance reported commitment of the second task force south toward Hill 760/780 to reinforce the lead task force. The AGMB had defeated the lead task force and forced the 2d task force to assume a hasty defense vicinity Hill 780. The regimental commander then committed his main body to the northern option. Additionally, the regimental commander directed the 2d echelon to reinforce the FSE, who had been severely attrited by the lead task force.

MAIN BODY/2D TF FIGHT
Lead TF Defeated

AGMB

FSE   LEAD TF

BDE RSV

2ND TF

FLANK SECURITY   CRP

KEY

UNIT OCCUPYING FIRING LINE	BLUFOR UNITS
	RECON GRP
FIRING LINE	MRP
	MRC
FASCAM	MRB
PERS CHEM	MRR
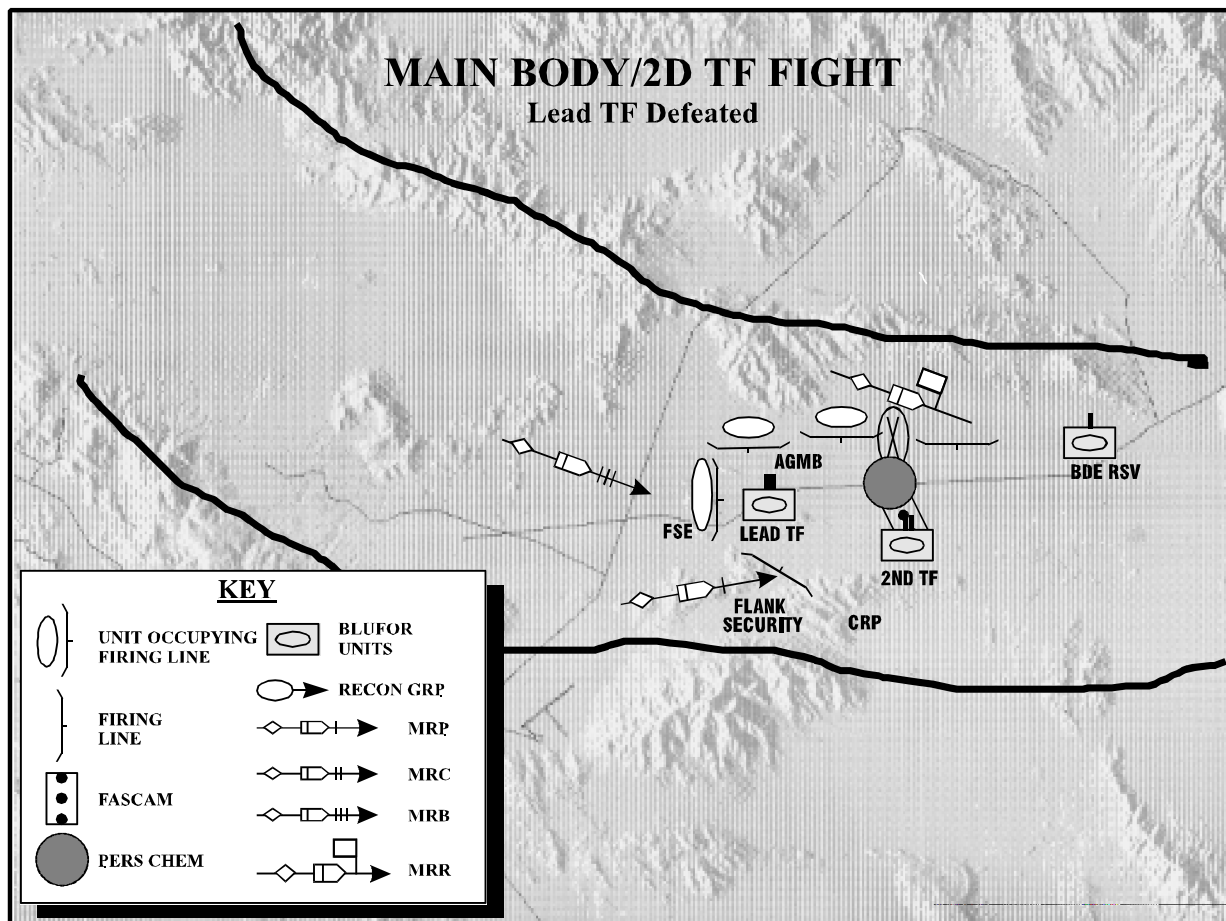
MRB EXECUTION: At this point, the regimental commander turned over the execution of the operation to the MRB commanders. The regimental CP continued to support the MRB commanders with fires and other combat multipliers. Seeing the commitment of the main body, the brigade committed its reserve in an attempt to block the OPFOR attack north of the Race Track. Main body forces destroyed the brigade reserve and continued to envelop and destroy the lead task force. The 2d Echelon attacked through the FSE, completing the destruction of the lead task force, and assisting in the destruction of the 2d task force vicinity Hill 760. Endstate: the regiment successfully destroyed both task forces and moved to its objective with two MRBs (+) remaining.
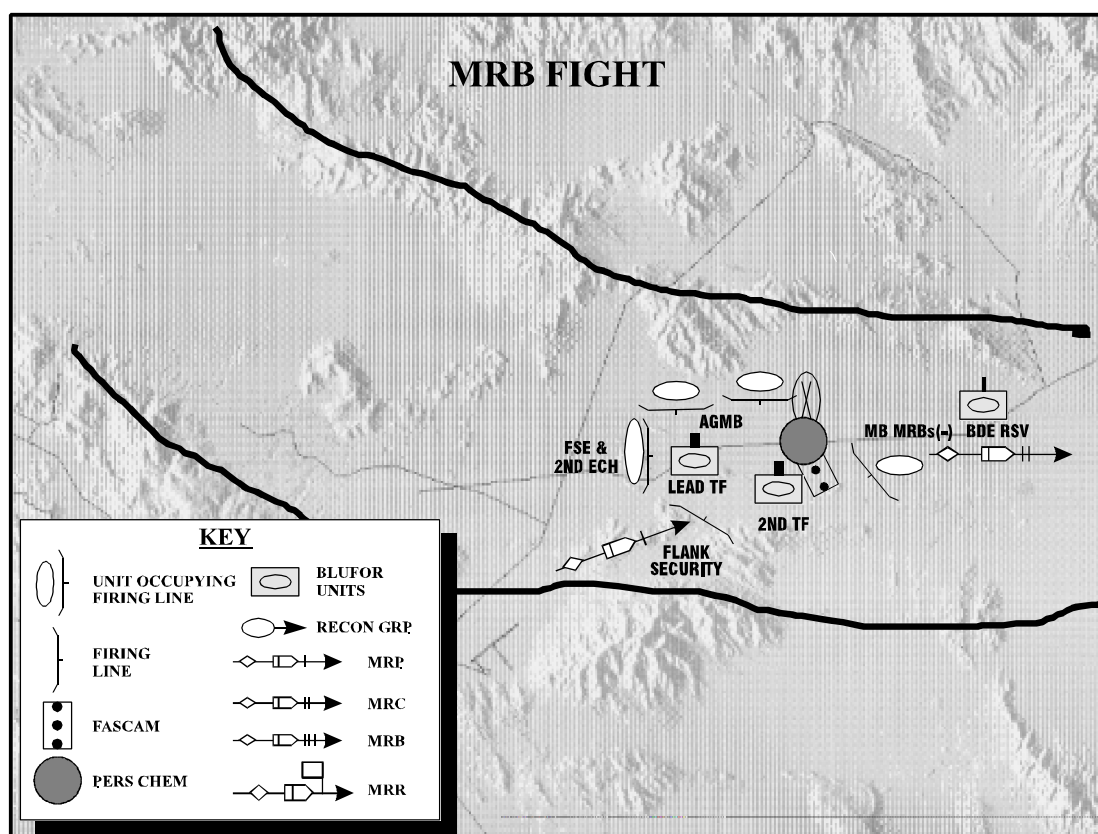
MRB FIGHT

FSE &
2ND ECH

AGMB

LEAD TF

2ND TF

FLANK
SECURITY

MB MRBs(−)   BDE RSV

KEY

	UNIT OCCUPYING FIRING LINE		BLUFOR UNITS
FIRING LINE		RECON GRP	
FASCAM		MRP	
PERS CHEM		MRC	
		MRB	
		MRR	

SUMMARY: Decision-point tactics are essential to fighting the fluid battlefield conditions present during the meeting battle. There are four imperatives to the successful execution of decision-point tactics during the meeting battle.

Imperative 1: A unit must have good battlefield vision to clearly identify the conditions necessary to execute a specific decision. The simplicity of the meeting battle maneuver plan, coupled with a solid wargame and rehearsal process, assists the commander in achieving battlefield vision.

Imperative 2: Successful reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance efforts by both regimental and CRPs are essential to identifying the decision-point conditions and denying the same to the enemy.

Imperative 3: The OPFOR's highly trained crews and platoons are the foundation for the execution of decision-point tactics.

Imperative 4: Deception operations in support of the meeting battle, although not as resource-intensive as other operations, are essential to gaining the time necessary to get inside the enemy commander's decision cycle. Decision-point tactics are neither unique or new, but they form the foundation for the successful

execution during the meeting battle. ✪
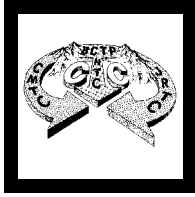
Chapter IV: *APPLYING DECISION-POINT TACTICS TO THE DEFENSE*
(Fighting the Enemy. . .Not the Plan)

Now let's apply the imperatives of decision-point tactics to defensive operations, highlighting those aspects of each imperative specifically to planning, preparing and executing the defense.

➜ *FIRST IMPERATIVE:* BATTLEFIELD VISION ←

A. *MTETT Analysis:* Here again MTETT can summarize some of the more important considerations for decision-point tactics during a defense. This analysis is critical for determining the *basic conditions and norms used in the wargame.*

Technique: Since inaccurate analysis leads to invalid results, include several alternatives and options, and they all should include *the enemy perspective.*

Critical considerations for each factor:

MISSION: The security zone is also *force oriented,* with tasks either to delay, disrupt or destroy attacking enemy forces. The large sector associated with the security zone *implies that the defending force must maneuver to achieve mass on the attacking force.*

Therefore, maneuver decision points are developed, *based on expected enemy actions.*

TERRAIN: Time and space are *especially critical for the security zone*
   ★ **identification of** *all possible* **maneuver routes**
   ★ **identification of choke points**
   ★ **identification of intervisibility lines**
   ★ **identification of key and decisive terrain features that could assist in delaying, disrupting or destroying enemy forces**

Normal OPFOR sector sizes range from 20 to 30 kilometers in depth and 6 to 20 kilometers in width. *Doctrinal* depth and width, in contrast, are 20 - 50 kms in depth and 5 - 10 kms in width.
The attacking force has the *initial* advantage because it dictates the initial area of battle.

Technique: The OPFOR attempts to visualize the potential initial areas of the battlefield to then determine how to make the best use of the terrain to *delay, disrupt, or destroy the enemy.*

For the example scenario, the MRB commander conducted the following terrain analysis (reference terrain orientation map below). The sector is 20 km at its widest point and the distance from FLOT to rear boundary is 29 km. Examination of the sector reveals that the first defensible terrain runs roughly north and south from Brown (NK350165) and Debnam (NK305150) passes to Hill 899 (NK317088). The terrain to the west is indefensible because the Matterhorn splits the sector. By establishing initial positions just to the east of this terrain, the MRB is able to establish fire sacks on the reverse slope and at natural choke points. The sector chokes down to approximately seven km vicinity the Iron Triangle (NK430155), Hill 780 (NK438117) and Chod Hill. Major avenues of approach included Brown and Debnam Passes, the Colorado Wash, and the south wall vicinity Hill 899. The approach north of the Matterhorn (NK265155) is flat and fast while the approach south of the Matterhorn along the Washboard is broken and slow. Key terrain includes the Goat Trail (NK365176), Brown Pass, Debnam Pass, Colorado Wash (NK285123), Hill 899, and Hidden Valley (NK410080). All of the key terrain represents major avenues of approach or areas vital to flank security. Decisive terrain was identified as the Iron Triangle and Hill 780. If these two pieces of terrain were lost, the enemy would be able to place direct fires on the first echelon defense.

NTC TERRAIN ORIENTATION

CRASH
HILL

ECHO VALLEY

A & B
PASSES

GRANITE
PASS

K-BAR PASS

GOAT TRAIL

ARTILLERY
PIECE

BROWN PASS
& CUT

IRON TRIANGLE

RACE
TRACK

FLAG
POLE

DEBNAM PASS

COLORADO

HILL 800

WASH BOARD

HILL
876

HILL
780

HILL
760

HILL
720

PEANUT CHOD
HILL

HILL
824

HILL
781

BDE
HILL

HIDDEN VALLEY

HILL
899

JOHN WAYNE
PASS

SIBERIAN
RIDGE

RED LAKE
PASS

FT IRWIN

VOD

WHALE

ENEMY: Again, **THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR,** and during security zone operation, *one of the hardest to analyze.*
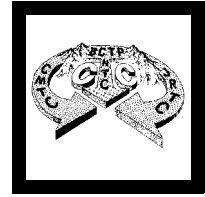
Two key variables that *trigger key decision points:*
   ★ **during a security zone the enemy has the initiative**
   ★ **because of the size of the sector, he normally has numerous options, both in formations used and avenue of approaches available**

The security zone, by design, is **a *high risk mission.***

Techniques:
1. Identify and wargame ***all potential enemy courses of action***; not just the top three.
2. Analyze the BLUFOR unit's training level, most specifically, their ability to execute battle drills.
3. Analyze the BLUFOR commander (the most difficult analysis) using the following criteria:
   * **ability to make quick decisions**
   * **ability to successfully communicate those decisions to subordinates**
   * **preferred tactics, i.e., two abreast; one up/one back, etc.**
   * **preferred movement speeds**
   * **preferred use of combat multipliers**

For the example scenario, enemy forces consisted of two task forces (TF) with a combined combat potential of 58 M1A1s and 68 M2s (10 of which were Bradley Stinger Fighting Vehicles) along with 150 dismounts. Reconnaissance assets included 20 scout HMMWVs and the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). The UAV poses some unique problems. The MRB could set out counter-reconnaissance against the scouts, but there was nothing active it could do to hinder the UAV (Note: This was an ROE shortfall that has since been corrected). However, deception could potentially work well against it. The MRB needs to show the enemy what he wants to see. Since this was the first battle of the rotation, there was very little information available on how the brigade commander preferred to fight. However, the unit's reputation from previous rotations highlighted a unit that could move quickly, fight well, and adequately integrate their combat multipliers. In short, it would be prudent not to accept risk initially because the enemy had shown the ability to take advantage of opportunities. The analysis also identified seven potential enemy courses of action against the initial positions and two courses of actions against subsequent positions. These courses of action will be addressed in more detail below.

> **TIME:** For security zone operations, this is especially critical because of
>   * **the large sector**
>   * **the requirement to withdraw to subsequent positions**

Technique: For executing the required delay tactics
1. The delay is ***time specific,*** which, therefore, dictates the criteria and the method of fighting. The commander is forced to balance preservation of force against attempting to gain more time at a particular battle position.
2. Key planning and execution considerations:
   * **movement times for both enemy and friendly forces on specific routes**
   * **movement from hide positions to fighting positions**
   * **time required to employ special munitions such as FASCAM, smoke and chemical agents**
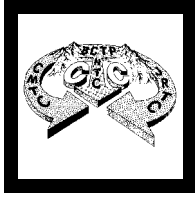
For the example scenario, the mission required the MRB to delay enemy forces for 18 hours. The long delay time, coupled with the relatively shallow sector depth and the expected aggressive enemy attack, forced the MRB to plan on a force destruction task and not assume the enemy would be halted with limited engagements and losses. Estimation of withdrawal times from seven minutes to fifteen minutes was based on terrain analysis and experience until an actual rehearsal could be conducted on the ground. Enemy rates of march were estimated to be much faster on an approach march north of the Matterhorn than south of it because of the rough terrain in the Washboard. Because of this, the MRB would potentially have much less time to react to an attack through Brown or Debnam Pass than an attack across the Washboard (i.e., 30 min travel time on northern avenues and 60 min travel time over the Washboard). Movement out of hide positions would take from five to ten minutes so an early read on the enemy's approach would be necessary. Finally, because of the amount of time it takes to strikewarn and fire FASCAM and persistent chemicals (30 and 45 minues respectively), decision points for each would have to be established. The MRB was given 36 hours to complete all preparation (this includes the digging of all one-tier and two-tier fighting positions as well as emplacement of all obstacles) and rehearsals.

TROOPS: In addition to the considerations discussed earlier, the following information is pertinent to the example scenario:

The MRB consisted of four MRCs with a combat potential of 13 T-80s and 26 BMP 2s. Also attached were three AT-5s (anti-tank missile BRDMs), two 2A45s (anti-tank guns), and 200 infantry.

Veteran MRC commanders could command the initial positions and their MRCs would be doing most of the displacing and maneuvering. The more junior MRC commanders could defend subsequent positions.

AT5s would be critical to assisting in the withdrawal because of their long engagement range fires capabilities.

This would be the augmentee infantry's first fight; therefore, the MRB commander limited their movement requirements and placed them in strong flank positions along critical avenues of approach.

Other aspects of analysis:

B. Wargaming: Security zone operations must consider all possible enemy courses of action. Consequently, *the wargame takes a lot more time for security zone missions.* Each of these courses of action must be wargamed and the conditions needed to execute decision-point tactics identified during this process. The belt technique is used for this scenario, and *two major zones of battle were identified.*

C. Rehearsals: Again, *MORE EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON THE REHEARSAL THAN THE ACTUAL ORDER ITSELF.*
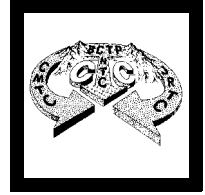
➜ *SECOND IMPERATIVE:* SUCCESSFUL RECONNAISSANCE/ COUNTER-RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS ←
(Maintaining Battlefield Vision)

Specific to security zone missions is the necessity of successful counter-reconnaissance operations *throughout the sector* to hinder the enemy's decisionmaking process and further enhance deception operations.

➜ *THIRD IMPERATIVE:* WELL-TRAINED CREWS AND PLATOONS ←

As with any other mission, the OPFOR's success in security zone operations is based *primarily on its well-trained crews and platoons.*

➜ *FOURTH IMPERATIVE:* EFFECTIVE DECEPTION OPERATIONS ←

Deception is *especially critical* for security zone battles.

Techniques:
1. Use of deception turrets and obstacles.

2. Effective deception positions can force the enemy to *deploy early* and commit resources and combat multipliers. **RESULT:** This buys time for the OPFOR.

3. Successful deception further results in *confirmation of the BLUFOR S2s template.*
   EXAMPLE: If the BLUFOR S2 reconnaissance identifies templated forces/obstacles, the BLUFOR S2 *is more apt to accept the report, even if the report is not totally substantiated.*

4. Deception EW traffic is also developed to reinforce visual deception operations.

5. Fires and smoke also assist in the deception efforts.
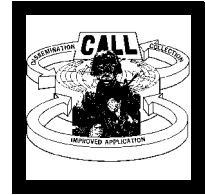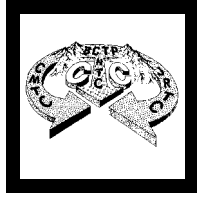
Example Decision-Point Tactics Battle (Security Zone Scenario)

MISSION: 3d MRB, 32d GMRR establishes a security zone NLT 19XXX96 to delay enemy forces until 201400XXX96 to allow the first echelon MRB to complete the development of the division main defensive belt.

ENEMY COURSES OF ACTION: The wargame templated seven potential BLUEFOR courses of action (COA) against initial positions (zone 1) and two BLUEFOR COAs against subsequent positions (zone 2).

Zone 1 COAs:
COA 1 **-** Brigade attacks with one task force leading, second task force follows and maneuvers along axis BELL TOWER (Brown Pass).
COA 2 **-** Brigade attacks with one task force leading, second task force follows and maneuvers along axis DALLAS (Debnam Pass (NK302151)).
COA 3 **-** Brigade attacks with one task force leading, second task force follows and maneuvers along axis WACO (Colorado).
COA 4 **-** Brigade attacks with one task force leading, second task force follows and maneuvers along axis ALAMO (south wall/hill 899 (NK318088)).
COA 5 **-** Brigade attacks with two task forces abreast and maneuvers along axis BELL TOWER and DALLAS
COA 6 **-** Brigade attacks with two task forces abreast and maneuvers along axis WACO and ALAMO.
COA 7 **-** Brigade attacks with two task forces abreast and maneuvers along axis BELL TOWER or DALLAS and WACO or ALAMO.

Zone 2 COAs:
CoA 1 **-** Brigade attacks with one task force leading, second task force follows and maneuvers along north wall (Iron Triangle (NK423162)).
COA 2 **-** Brigade attacks with one task force leading, second task force follows and maneuvers along axis south wall (Chod/Peanut Pass (NK411104)).
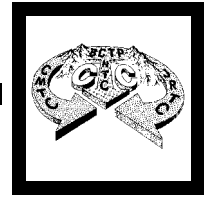
CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION: This operation allowed the first echelon regiment to complete the development of the division's main defensive belt. The MRD commander intended to accomplish this by establishing a security zone with two MRCs forward and two MRCs back, infantry protecting the flanks, and AT-5s in depth. The two MRCs forward will attrit and the two MRCs back would delay. Infantry in the north would block and infantry in the south would disrupt. ***Decisive to this operation*** was the ability of the forward MRCs to attrit three company teams or greater from the attacking brigade. ***Critical to this operation*** was our ability to mass two MRCs worth of combat power on each task force. These two imperatives became the driving force behind each decision the MRB commander made prior to and during the fight.
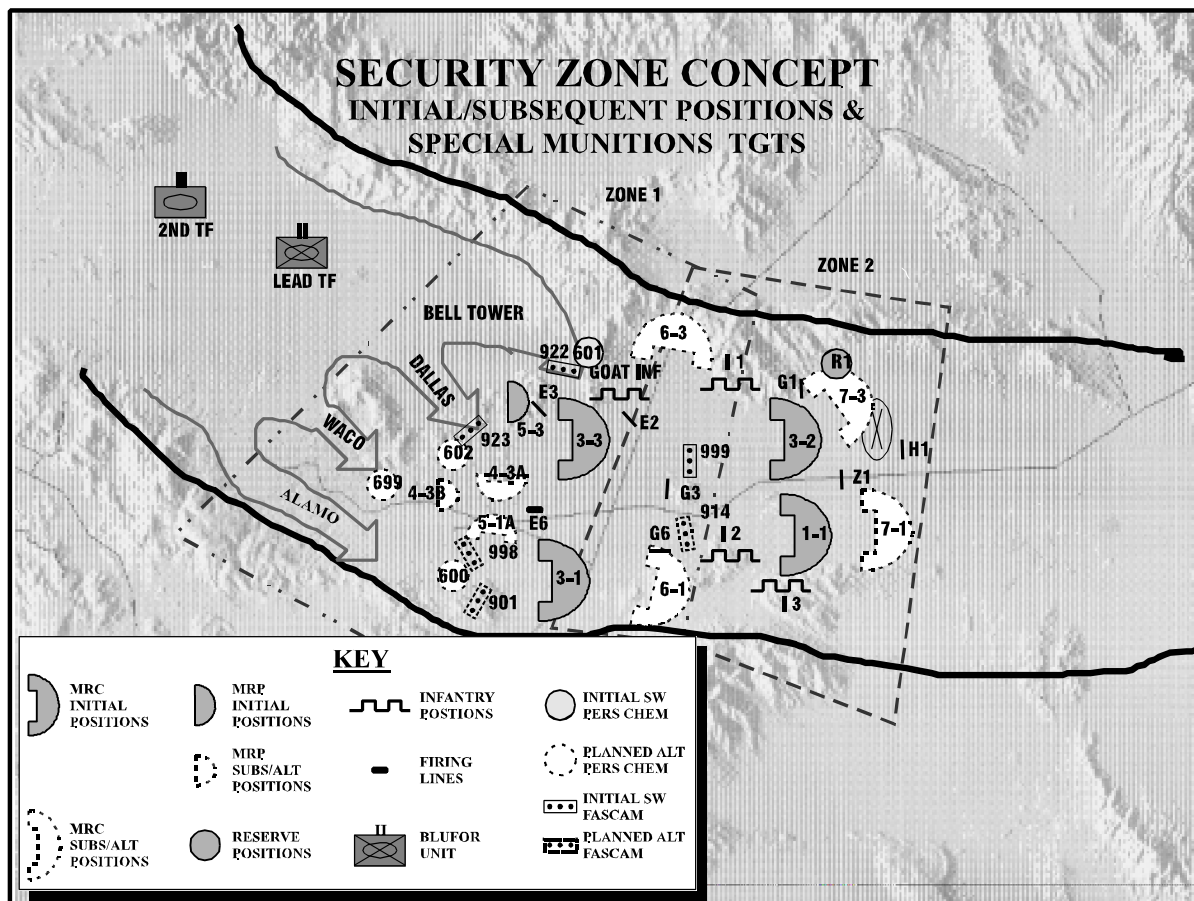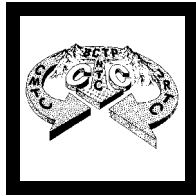
MANEUVER DECISIONS: The MRB commander was confident that the two MRCs back could effectively delay five company teams or less, so he reasoned that the decisive point was to attrit three company teams or greater. Not an easy task! However, to accomplish this task, it was critical to mass two MRCs on the lead task force. The initial set was designed to quickly respond to any of the seven courses of action. For enemy COAs 1 and 2, the forward MRCs would set an "L"-shaped fire sack in the north by setting battle position (BP)'s 3-3, 4-3A, and 4-3B.   For enemy COA 4, the forward MRCs would set the "L"-shaped fire sack in the south by setting BP's 3-1 and 5-1A. Enemy COAs 3, 5, 6, 7 presented another challenge, on any abreast option the forward MRCs would find themselves fighting with one MRC per task force which was unacceptable. Additionally, Colorado Wash split the sector so both MRCs again could not mass two MRCs against one task force in this terrain. Therefore, for enemy COAs 3, 5, 6, 7, the forward MRCs would be forced to withdraw to their next positions. The two forward MRCs would withdraw to BP 6-3 in the north and BP 6-1 in the south respectively. The remainder of the triggers for maneuver and fires are displayed in the decision support matrix.

SECURITY ZONE CONCEPT
INITIAL/SUBSEQUENT POSITIONS &
SPECIAL MUNITIONS TGTS

KEY

MRC INITIAL POSITIONS	MRP INITIAL POSITIONS	INFANTRY POSITIONS	INITIAL SW PERS CHEM
	MRP SUBS/ALT POSITIONS	FIRING LINES	PLANNED ALT PERS CHEM
MRC SUBS/ALT POSITIONS	RESERVE POSITIONS	BLUFOR UNIT	INITIAL SW FASCAM
			PLANNED ALT FASCAM

Courses of Action (COAs)

   Initial Unit Set Positions (All COAs):   This describes initial sets and main task and purpose for each major subordinate element. Subsequent CoA descriptions only address changes to the initial sets.

   1st MRC (2/8)[2]: Initial: Set BP 3-2; Task-Delay brigade; Purpose - To allow 4th MRB time to prepare 1st echelon defense. Remain in hide positions during zone 1 fight.

   2d MRC (3/8): Initial: Set BP 3-1; Task-Attrit lead TF; Purpose - To not allow greater then five company/teams to penetrate PL R2.

_____

   [2] 2/8 is shorthand for two T80s and eight BMPs.
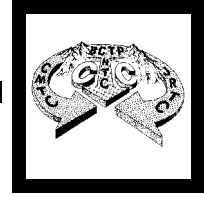
3d MRC (3/6): Initial: Set BP 3-3; Task-Attrit lead TF; Purpose - To not allow greater then five company/teams to penetrate PL R2.

4th MRC (3/8): Initial: Set BP 1-1; Task-Delay brigade; Purpose - To allow 4th MRB time to prepare 1st echelon defense. Remain in hide positions during zone 1 fight.

Anti-Tank Company (ATC)

AT5s: Initial: Sets firing lines E2, G3, G6; Task-Destroy lead TF forces; Purpose - To allow 3-1 and 3-3 to withdrawal.

2A45s: Initial: Set I1; Task-Destroy enemy forces; Purpose - To protect flank of BP 3-2.

Reserve (1/2): Initial: Set R1; Task-Reinforce designated BP; Purpose - To prevent penetration of BP or assist in withdraw.

Goat Infantry (30): Initial: Set A9 (goat trail); Task-Block goat trail; Purpose - To protect flanks of BP's 3-3, 6-3.

Rampage Infantry (70): Initial: Set I1; Task-Block 114 Wadi; Purpose - To prevent envelopment of BP 3-2.

Angel Infantry (100): Initial: Sets I2 (30), I3 (70); Task-Disrupt enemy formations; Purpose - To protect flank of BP 1-1.

Fires: Initial strikewarns - Persistent chemical - target 601, FASCAM No. 1 - target 922 and No. 2 - target 923, Nonpersistent No. 1 - vic Debnam, No. 2 - Colorado, No. 3 - TBD, SOKOL - On Call, CAS - On station 0630. (Note all fires are designed to initially attrit lead TF and then provide separation of TFs to facilitate withdrawal of forces from their initial positions.)
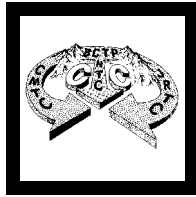
Zone 1:

COA No. 1 (Northern "L")   (Enemy COAs 1 and 2 - BELL TOWER and DALLAS)

1st MRC (2/8):   Remain in BP 3-2 hide positions during zone 1 fight.

2d MRC (3/8): O/O move, occupy and fight BPs 4-3A (2/6) and 4-3B (1/2) to destroy at least three company teams from the 1st TF. O/O withdrawal and fight BP 6-1 to continue attrition of lead and 2d TF.

3d MRC (3/6):   Remain and fight BP 3-3. O/O withdrawal and fight BP 6-3 to continue attrition of lead and 2d TF. Emplace MOD in front of BP 4-3A if enemy comes through Brown Pass (Enemy COA 1) or in front of firing line E3 if the enemy comes through Debnam Pass (Enemy COA 2).

4th MRC (3/8):   Remain in hide positions during zone 1 fight. Hold UMZ for zone 2 fight.

Anti-Tank Company (ATC)

AT5s: Remain and fight E2 and G3, O/O G6 moves and fights from E6.

2A45s: Remain and fight I1.

Reserve (1/2): Remain in initial set.

Goat Infantry (30): Remain and fight A9. O/O withdraw to I1.

Rampage Infantry (70): Remain and fight I1

Angel Infantry (100): Remain and fight I2 and I3

Fires: (Fires COAs 1 and 2)

★ Fires COA 1 (Enemy COA 1-BELL TOWER): Fire persistent chemical target 601; shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 922 on 2nd company/team, lead TF. Strikewarn (SW) and O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 999. SW and O/O shoot nonpersistent chemical on lead TF in Brown Pass. Fire 2nd nonpersistent chemical on 2nd TF to facilitate withdrawal. O/O position SOKOL vic Old Harry/ Hill 1141 to facilitate withdrawal. O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams of lead TF west of Brown Pass. IEW jams artillery and C^2 nets.

★ Fires COA 2 (Enemy COA 2-DALLAS): SW and O/O fire persistent chemical target 602; restrikewarn (RSW) and shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 923 between TFs. O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 923 on 2nd company/team, lead TF. O/O shoot nonpersistent chemical on lead TF in Debnam. Fire 2nd nonpersistent chemical on 2nd TF to facilitate withdrawal. O/O position SOKOL to backstop Hill 910 to facilitate withdrawal. O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams of lead TF west of Debnam Pass. IEW jams artillery and C^2 nets.

Decision Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 1 and Withdrawal Criteria:

★ **BLUEFOR COA 1 or 2**

★ **Withdrawal if three or more BLUFOR company/teams are destroyed, less than a 4/10 OPFOR remains combat effective, and break in contact is possible.**
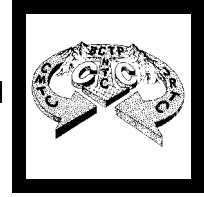
COA No. 2 (Southern "L") (Enemy COA 4 - ALAMO)

1st MRC (2/8): Remain in BP 3-2 hide positions during zone 1 fight.

2d MRC (3/8): Remain and fight BP 3-1 O/O withdraw and fight BP 6-1 to continue attrition of lead and 2nd TF.

3d MRC (3/6):   Move, occupy and fight BP 5-1A. O/O withdraw and fight BP 7-3. Emplace MOD in front of BP 5-1A if enemy comes along south wall (Enemy COA 6).

4th MRC (3/8): Remain in hide positions during zone 1 fight. Hold UMZ for zone 2 fight.

Anti-Tank Company (ATC)

AT5s: Remain and fight G6 and G3, O/O E2 moves and fights from 5-1A.

2A45s: Remain and fight I1.

Reserve (1/2): Remain in initial set.

Goat Infantry (30): O/O withdrawal to I1.

Rampage Infantry (70): Remain and fight I1

*Angel Infantry (100):* Remain and fight I2 and I3

Fires. Fires COA 6 (Enemy COA 6-ALAMO): SW and O/O shoot persistent chemical target 600; SW and O/O shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 901 on 2d company/team, lead TF. SW and O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 998. SW and O/O shoot nonpersistent chemical on lead TF vic 899 (ALAMO). SW and O/O fire 2d nonpersistent chemical on 2d TF vic ALAMO to facilitate withdrawal. O/O position SOKOL vic Hill 899 to facilitate withdrawal. O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams of lead TF west of Hill 899. IEW jams artillery and C^2 nets.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 2 and Withdrawal Criteria:

✸ **BLUEFOR COA 4**

✸ **Withdrawal if three or more BLUFOR company/teams are destroyed, less than a 4/10 OPFOR remains combat effective and break in contact is possible.**
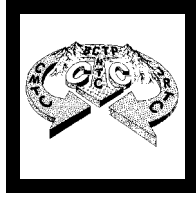
COA No. 3 (Withdraw)   (Enemy COAs 3, 5, 6, 7 - two TFs abreast, both TFs in the Colorado)

1st MRC (2/8):   Remain in BP 3-2 hide positions during zone 1 fight.

2d MRC (3/8): O/O delay with 1 MRP (1/2) from BP 3-1, remainder (2/6) withdraws and fights from BP 6-1.

3d MRC (3/6): O/O delay with 1 MRP from BP 5-3, remainder (2/6) withdraws and fights from 6-3. Emplace MOD along western end of BP 6-3.

4th MRC (3/8): Remain in hide positions during zone 1 fight. Hold UMZ for zone 2 fight.

Anti-Tank Company (ATC)

AT5s: Remain and fight E2, G6 and G3 and cover withdraw of lead MRCs.

2A45s: Remain and fight I1.

Reserve (1/2): Remain in initial set.

Goat Infantry (30): Remain and fight A9. O/O withdrawal to I1.

Rampage Infantry (70): Remain and fight I1

Angel Infantry (100): Remain and fight I2 and I3

Fires. (Fires COAs 3, 5, 6, 7)

★ Fires COA 3 (Enemy COA 3-WACO) SW and O/O fire persistent chemical target 699; SW and shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 999. SW and O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 914. O/O shoot nonpersistent chemical on lead TF in WACO. RSW and fire 2d nonpersistent chemical on 2d TF. SOKOL held for zone 2 fight. O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams of lead TF west in WACO. IEW jams artillery and C^2 nets.

★ Fires COA 5 (Enemy COA 3-BELL TOWER/DALLAS): Fire persistent chemical target 601; shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 922 on 2d company/team, lead TF. O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 923. O/O shoot nonpersistent chemical on lead TF in Debnam. RSW and fire 2d nonpersistent chemical on 2d TF in Debnam. O/O position SOKOL vic Old Harry/Hill 1141 to facilitate withdrawal. O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams of lead TF west of Debnam and Brown passes. IEW jams artillery and C^2 nets.

★ Fires COA 6 (Enemy COA 6-WACO/ALAMO) SW and O/O fire persistent chemical target 600; SW and shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 999. SW and O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 914. O/O shoot nonpersistent chemical on lead TF in WACO. SW and fire 2d nonpersistent chemical on 2d TF on ALAMO. O/O position SOKOL vic Hill 899 to facilitate withdrawal. O/O CAS attacks to attrit/delay TFs in WACO and ALAMO. IEW jams artillery and C^2 nets.

★ Fires COA 7 (Enemy COA 7-WACO/DALLAS) Hold 601 or SW and O/O fire persistent chemical target 699; SW FASCAM No. 1, target 999. SW FASCAM No. 2, target 996. O/O shoot nonpersistent chemical on lead TF in WACO. O/O 2d nonpersistent chemical on 2d TF in DALLAS or RSW on TF in WACO. O/O position SOKOL vic Hill 1141 to facilitate withdrawal. O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams of TFs in WACO and DALLAS. IEW jams artillery and C^2 nets.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 3 Withdrawal:

★ **BLUEFOR COAs 3, 5, 6, 7 - Two task forces abreast.**

★ **Withdraw if situation does not allow the massing of two MRCs against one task force.**
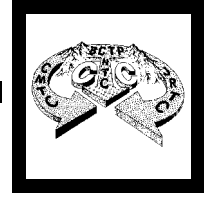
Zone 2:

COA No. 1 (South - Chod/Peanut Pass)

1st MRC (2/8): Occupy and fight BP 3-2, reconstitute reserve (1/2).

2d MRC (3/8): Remaining forces occupy and fight BP 6-1. O/O fight G5 or BP 7-1.

3d MRC (3/6): Remaining forces occupy and fight BP 7-3. B/P to reconstitute reserve (1/2).

4th MRC (3/8): O/O occupy and fight BP 1-1. O/O emplace UMZ.

Anti-Tank Company (ATC)

AT5s: Move from E2 and G3 to BP 1-1, G6 to north of I3.

2A45s: One system remains and fights I1; O/O move one system to H2.

Reserve (1/2): O/O occupy and fight H2.

Goat Infantry (30): Withdraw to I1.

Rampage Infantry (70): Move 60 Infantry to BP 1-1, remaining forces fight I1

Angel Infantry (100): Remain and fight I2 and I3

Fires. If available, O/O shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 914. If available, SW and O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 999. If available, SW and O/O shoot 3d nonpersistent chemical west of Peanut/Chod Gap. O/O position SOKOL vic Chod Hill. If available O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams west of Peanut/Chod Gap. IEW continues to jam artillery and C ^{2} nets.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 1:   BLUEFOR COA south toward Chod/Peanut Gap.

COA No. 2 (North - Iron Triangle)

1st MRC (2/8): Occupy and fight BP 3-2.

2d MRC (3/8): Remaining forces withdraw to and fight BP 7-1.

3d MRC (3/6): Remaining forces withdraw to and fight BP 6-3. O/O occupy and fight BP 7-3. B/P to reconstitute reserve (1/2).

4th MRC (3/8): Occupy and fight BP 1-1, Reconstitute reserve (1/2).

Anti-Tank Company (ATC)

AT5s: E2 moves and fights G1; G3 moves and fights north of BP 1-1; G6 moves and fights H1.

2A45s: Remain and fight I1.

Reserve (1/2): O/O occupy and fight G1.

Goat Infantry (30): O/O withdraw to I1.

Rampage Infantry (70): Remain and fight I1

Angel Infantry (100):   Move 60 infantry to G1; remaining infantry fights I2 and I3.

Fires. If available, O/O shoot FASCAM No. 1, target 999. If available, RSW and O/O shoot FASCAM No. 2, target 999. If available, SW and O/O shoot 3d nonpersistent chemical west of Hill 876. O/O position SOKOL vic Iron Triangle. If available, O/O CAS attacks to attrit trail teams west of Hill 876. IEW continues to jam artillery and C ^{2} nets.

Decision-Point Conditions to Execute COA No. 2:   BLUEFOR COA north toward Iron Triangle

Decision Support Matrix: The above courses of action were converted to the following decision support to simplify execution decisions.
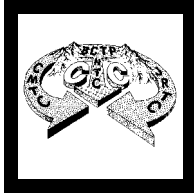
SECURITY ZONE DECISION SUPPORT MATRIX (MANEUVER)

|		Zone 1			Zone 2	
INITIAL SET		**PASSES/899 BATTLE**			**876 BATTLE**	
Friendly COA		COA 1 Northern L	COA 2 Southern L	COA 3 Withdrawal	COA 1 South	COA 2 North
Enemy COA		1 up/1 back Brn or Deb (COA 1,2)	1 up/1 back 899 (COA 4)	2 abreast or 1 x 1 Colorado (COAs 3,5,6,7		
Withdrawal Criteria		Less than 4/10 left Dead > 3 Co/TMs If break possible	Less than 4/10 left Dead > 3 Co/TMs If break possible	*Must get 2 MRCs on one TF or withdrawal	NA	NA
1ST MRC T: Delay P: Allow 4 MRBs to prep fwd pos def	3-2 (3/8)	Hide position	Hide position	Hide position	Occupy 3-2 reconstitute the reserve Time: 8 min 30 sec	Occupy 3-2 Time: 8 min 30 sec
2D MRC T: Attrit P: Nothing>5 Co/TMs penetrate R2	3-1 (3/8) 1 TDAM UMZ O/O 4mrc	Move to Fight 4-3A (2/6) 4-3B (l/2) Time: 6 min	Remain in 3-1 W/D set 6-1 Time: 13 min	(1/2) 3-1 Delay (2/6) W/D 6-1 Time: 13 min	Remain 6-1 OO fight G5 or 7-1 Time: 10 min	Occupy 7-1 Reconst the Rsv Time: 10 min
3D MRC T: Delay P: Nothing>5 Co/TMs penetrate R2	3-3 (32/6) 5-3 (1-2) 1 TDAM & MOD	Remain W/D 5-3 to 3-3 W/D set 6-3 Time: 11 min	Move/fight 5-1A W/D set 6-3 Time: 15 min	(1/2) Delay (2/6) W/D 6-3 Time: 16 min	Occupy 7-3 Reconst the Rsv Time: 18 min	Occupy 6-3 Time: 10 min
4TH MRC T: Delay P: Allow 4 MRB to prep fwd pos def	1-1 (3/8)	Hide position	Hide position	Hide position	Occupy 1-1 Time: 8 min	Occupy 1-1 Reconst the Rsv Time: 7 min 30 sec
RESERVE P: Reinforce	R1 (1/2) 2TDAM & MSD	R1	R1	R1	O/O Occupy H2 Time: 11 min	O/O Occupy G1 Time: 4 min
AT5 T: Destroy P: Allow 3-1, 3-3 to withdrawal	E2,G3,G6 1 per	E2 Remain G3 Remain G6 move to E6 Time: 7 min	E2 move to 5-1A G3 Remain G6 Remain Time: 6 min	E2 Remain G3 Remain G6 Remain	E2 to 1-1 G3 to 1-1 G6 to north 13 Time: 20 min	E2 to G2 G3 to north 1-1 G6 to H1 Time: 14 min
2A45 T: Destroy P: Protect Flank of 3-2	I1 2 systems	I1	I1	I1	One sys I1 One sys H2 Time: 20 min	I1
GOAT INFANTRY T: Block P: Prot Flk of 3-3, 6-3	A9 -30	Remain A9 O/O W/D to I1 Time: 15 min	W/D to I1 Time: 20 min	Remain A9	W/D to I1 Time: 20 min	O/O W/D to I1 Time: 20 min
RAMPAGE T: Block P: Prev envel of 3-2	I1 (70)	I1	I1	I1	Move 60 Inf to 1-1 Time: 30 min	I1
ANGEL T: Disrupt P: Protect flank of 1-1	I2 (30) I3 (70)	I2 I3	I2 I3	I2 I3	I2 I3	Move 60 Inf to G1 Time: 30 min
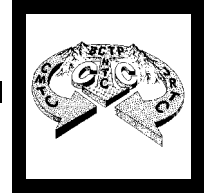
Special Munitions Decisions

Special munitions play a significant role in security zone operations, but they are a limited asset. Therefore, they require decision points. The MRB was allocated one persistent target, six lines of nonpersistent, and two FASCAM minefields. Employment of these assets is time-sensitive and requires between 30 to 45 minutes to restrikewarn on a new target. The initial targets were strikewarned to cover almost all of the potential enemy courses of action. The purpose was to contribute to the direct fire fight and/or delay enemy forces and facilitate MRC maneuvers. The initial persistent chemical strikewarn target was 601 (Brown Pass), FASCAM targets 922 (Brown Pass) and 923 (Debnam Pass) and nonpersistent targets in Debnam Pass and Colorado Wadi. Artillery systems were unavailable initially to strikewarn addition nonpersistent targets. If the brigade chose to attack abreast, either all special munitions would be fired at once to facilitate a break in contact or the regiment would shoot a combination that would break the enemy's momentum and allow the MRB to set the conditions for the decisive point. FASCAM 923 was critical because Brown Pass was the fastest enemy avenue of approach. The FASCAM could buy time to set the "L"-shaped engagement area or buy time to fire persistent chemical 601. In both cases, it would assist in separating the lead TF by shooting it between company teams. Terrain would slow any movement over the Washboard; therefore, the nonpersistents were initially strikewarned in Colorado Wadi and Debnam Pass. The details of our other special munitions triggers for all seven CoAs are displayed in the artillery decision support matrix.
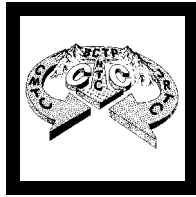
SECURITY ZONE DECISION SUPPORT MATRIX (FIRES)

| F-Fires COAs	INI SW	COA 1	COA 2	COA 3	COA 4	COA 5	COA 6	COA 7
Enemy COA Route		1 up/1 back Brown pass Bell Tower	1 up/1 back Debnam Dallas	1 up/1 back Colorado Waco	1 up/1 back 899 Alamo	2 Abreast Brwn/Deb BT/Dallas	2 Abreast Colorado/ 899 Waco/Alamo	2 Abreast Waco/Dallas
Pers Chem	601	shoot 601	RSW 602 Time: 45 min	SW 699 Time: 45 min	SW 600 Time: 45 min	shoot 601	SW 600 Time: 45 min	Hold 601 or SW 699
FASCAM No. 1	922	shoot 922	SW 923 Time: 45 min	SW 999 Time: 45 min	SW 901 Time: 45 min	shoot 922	SW 999 Time: 45 min	SW 999 Time: 45 min
FASCAM No. 2	923	SW 999 Time: 45 min	shoot 923	SW 914 Time: 45 min	SW 998 Time: 45 min	shoot 923	SW 914 Time: 45 min	shoot 923
NONPER CHEM 1	Deb Pass	SW Brown Time: 30 min	shoot Debnam	shoot Colo	SW Alamo Time: 30 min	shoot Debnam	shoot Colo	Hold Deb or SW Colo
NONPER CHEM 2	Colo Wadi	SW Brown Time: 30 min	Hold Colo	RSW Colo Time: 30 min	SW Alamo Time: 30 min	RSW Debnam Time: 30 min	RSW Colo Time: 30 min	Hold Deb or SW Colo
NONPER CHEM 3	no sys avail	SW Brown Time: 30 min	RSW Debnam Time: 30 min	RSW Colo Time: 30 min	SW Alamo Time: 30 min	RSW Debnam Time: 30 min	RSW Colo Time: 30 min	Hold Deb or SW Colo
SOKOL	TOC	Old Harry 1141	Backstop 910	3 Sisters	899	Old Harry 1141	Hold for zone 2	Old Harry 1141
CAS	IP 0630	Brown pass	Debnam	Colorado	899	Deb/Brwn	Colorado/ 899	Deb/Colo
IEW		Arty/C²	Arty/C²	Arty/C²	Arty/C²	Arty/C²	Arty/C²	Arty/C²

KEY
SW-Strikewarn   RSW-Restrikewarn   Colo-Colorado   Deb-Debnam
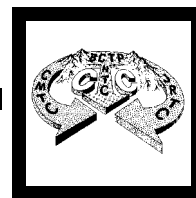
How Decision-Point Tactics Were Executed

● **FIRST Decision Point:** The division Reconnaissance reported one task force up and one back with the lead task force moving along axis DALLAS at a moderate rate of advance. The 2d TF's initial orientation was along BELL TOWER. The MRB commander decided to execute COA 1, DALLAS option. BP 3-1 repositioned to BP 4-3A (2/6) to set bottom portion of the "L" and BP 4-3B (1/2) as flank security. The AT 5 vic G6 also repositioned vic E6 to overwatch engagement area east of Debnam. BP 5-3 continued to hold awaiting the final read on the 2d TF. Additionally, the regimental commander strikewarned persistent chemical target 602, FASCAMs No. 1. He continued to hold target 922 until the commitment of 2d TF. FASCAM No. 2, target 923 were also set to fire on trigger. The non-ersistent was set to fire on trigger behind Debnam Pass. The nonpersistent in the Colorado Wadi was held awaiting a clear read. The regimental reconnaissance then adjusted its efforts to confirm or deny commitment of the 2d task force. They were also set to trigger the FASCAM in Debnam pass.

SECURITY ZONE
1ST DECISION POINT-COA 1
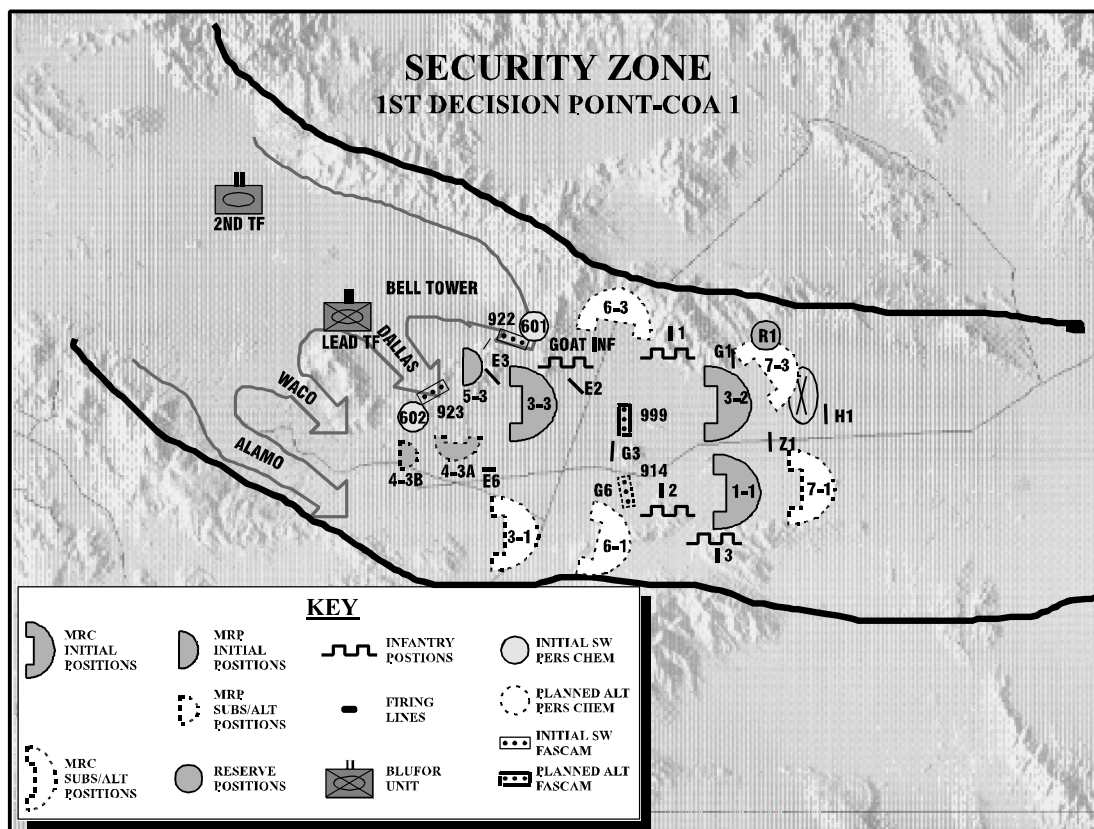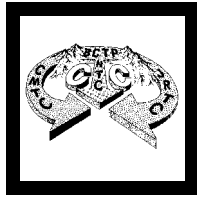
● **SECOND Decision Point:** The lead team of lead task force entered Debnam Pass which was blanked in BLUFOR smoke. The deception positions in Debnam Pass, smoke and fires from BP 5-3, and regimental reconnaissance BMPs caused the lead team and the task force to halt their forward movement. The BLUFOR commander had the lead team with engineers continue to look for a bypass to the deception tank ditch in Debnam Pass. Heavy BLUFOR smoke caused the OPFOR scout to trigge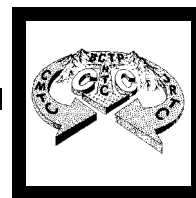r the execution of FASCAM 923 too early, causing the FASCAM to land in front of the lead team instead of on the 4th team. Faced with the FASCAM and the perceived forces in Debnam Pass, the BLUFOR commander ordered the lead task force to leave one team in Debnam Pass with engineers while diverting the remaining teams through Three Sisters Cut into the Colorado Wadi. This maneuver exposed the flank of BP 4-3A. Additionally, the time delay by the lead task force caused the 2d task force to come abreast oriented on BELL TOWER. Faced with a two task force abreast situation, the MRB commander's decision-point condition for withdrawal had been met. The MRB commander then ordered 4-3A to withdraw to BP 3-1 with 4-3B covering its withdrawal. BP 3-3 was ordered to withdraw to BP 6-3 with the forces in BP 5-3 covering the MRC's withdrawal from BP 3-3. The AT 5s were ordered to cover the withdraw of both MRCs. To assist in the withdrawal, the regimental commander fired nonpersistent chemicals on forces in WACO and BELL TOWER; he also fired persistent chemical 602 and reinforced these fires with CAS and HE artillery fires. The lead task force in the Colorado was initially delayed by nonpersistent chemicals and BP 4-3B, which destroyed the lead platoon, losing one BMP in the process. In reaction, the task force maneuvered into the persistent chemical. CAS, artillery and persistent chemical fires attrited two company teams from this task force, allowing the forces remaining in 4-3B to also withdraw to BP 3-1. BP 3-1 then withdrew to BP 6-1. The 2d task force was delayed in Brown Pass by fires, nonpersistent chemicals, and the brigades identification of obstacles vic BP 3-3. This delay allowed the platoon in BP 3-3 to withdraw to BP 6-3 without coming under direct fire contact.

SECURITY ZONE
2ND DECISION POINT- MRCs WITHDRAWAL

BELL TOWER

DALLAS

WACO

ALAMO

2ND TF
922 601
LEAD TF
E3
GOAT INF
923 5-3
3-3 E2
602
4-3B 4-3A E6
LEAD PLT
3-1
6-1
6-3
1
G1
R1
7-3
3-2 H1
999
G3
914 Z1
G6 2 1-1 7-1
3

KEY

MRC INITIAL POSITIONS	MRP INITIAL POSITIONS	INFANTRY POSITIONS / INITIAL SW PERS CHEM
ARTILLERY FIRES	MRP SUBS/ALT POSITIONS	FIRING LINES / PLANNED ALT PERS CHEM
MRC SUBS/ALT POSITIONS	RESERVE POSITIONS	EXECUTED PERS-CHEM / INITIAL SW FASCAM
		BLUFOR UNIT / PLANNED ALT FASCAM

● **THIRD Decision Point:** Recognizing that the OPFOR forces had withdrawn, the brigade committed its 2d task force toward the Peanut/Chod Gap. The 1st TF continued to reorganize after running into the persistent chemical and direct fires from BP 4-3B. This task force had about a company/team (+) remaining. In response, the MRB commander decided on Zone 2, COA 1. The commander first withdrew one MRP from BP 6-1 to 7-1. The commander also committed the reserve from R1 to H2 and ordered BP 3-2 to reconstitute a 1/2 reserve. Because of enemy orientation, the commander decided to have BP 6-3 and Goat infantry (TF Rampage) remain in place. The AT 5s at G6 and G3 continued to cover the withdrawal and significantly attrited the lead two company teams of the 2d task force. The AT 5 at G3 then withdrew to Z1.

SECURITY ZONE
3RD DECISION POINT- MRCs WITHDRAWAL

KEY

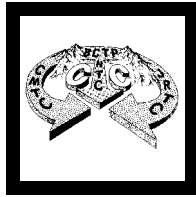|			
MRC INITIAL POSITIONS	MRP INITIAL POSITIONS	INFANTRY POSITIONS	INITIAL SW PERS CHEM
ARTILLERY FIRES	MRP SUBS/ALT POSITIONS	FIRING LINES	PLANNED ALT PERS CHEM
		EXECUTED PERS-CHEM	INITIAL SW FASCAM
MRC SUBS/ALT POSITIONS	RESERVE POSITIONS	BLUFOR UNIT	PLANNED ALT FASCAM

● **FOURTH AND FINAL Decision Point.** As the 2d task force, augmented by the remaining company team from the 1st task force, continued to attack toward Hill 876/Peanut/Chod Gaps, the MRC in BP 6-3 reported the brigade had no northern flank security. The MRC commander in BP 6-3 recommended that he reposition his forces to vic G3 and Hill 800 and attack by fire into the brigade's northern flank. The MRB commander decided to execute this hasty attack but directed the Goat Infantry and the AT 5 in E2 to remain in position and secure the right flank of the maneuvering MRC.

SECURITY ZONE
4TH DECISION POINT- BP 6-3 CATK
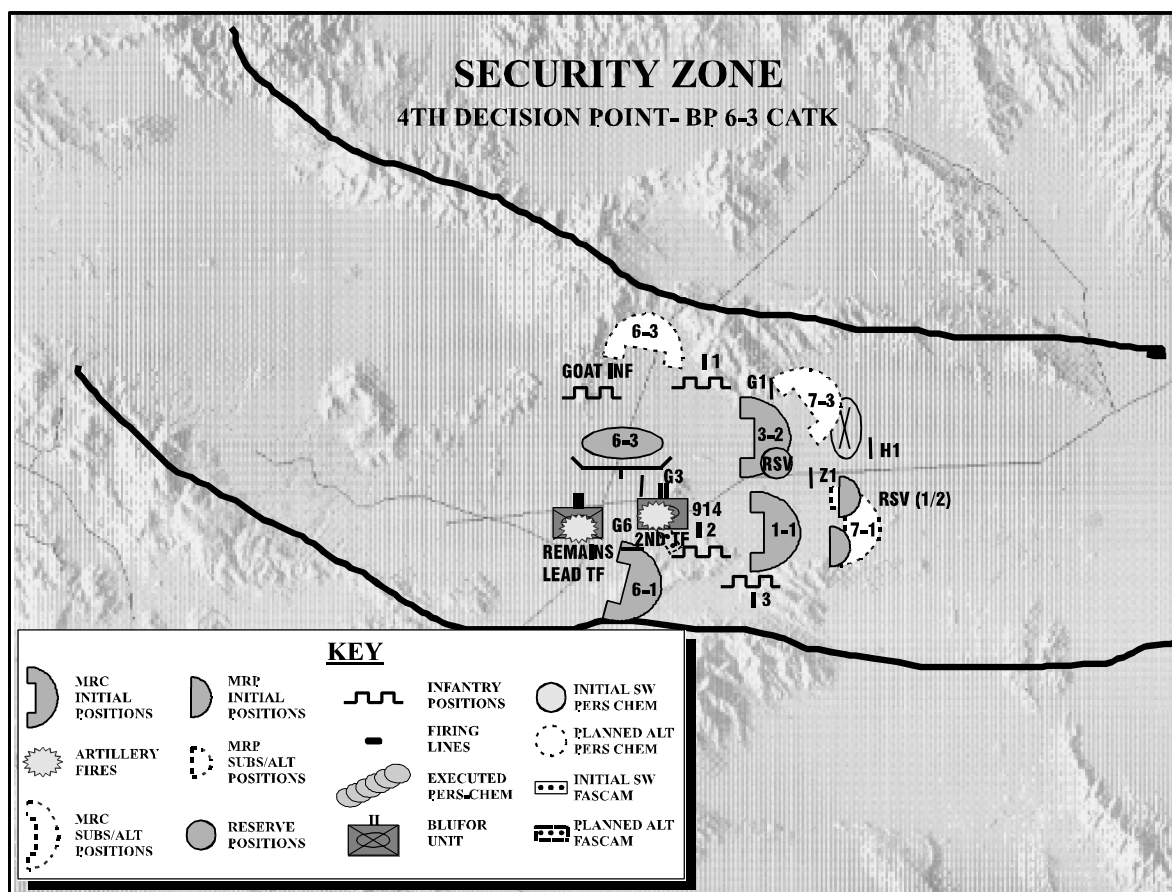
MRC Execution: At this point, the execution of the operation was turned over to the cross-talking MRC commanders with the MRB and regimental CPs eavesdropping and supporting the operations with fires and other combat multipliers. The brigade, unaware of the threat to its northern flank, continued to push through the Peanut/Chod Gap. Direct fires from BP 1-1, G6, I2 and I3, and the enveloping MRC from BP 6-3, coupled with indirect fires, eventually destroyed the remaining brigade forces.

Impact of Deception on the Operation: Often the full effect of deception operations is not known by the OPFOR. In this case, we learned after the rotation that deception and pre-conceived beliefs significantly effected the BLUFOR plan and execution. One of the main ways of achieving deception goals is to reinforce pre-conceived beliefs of BLUFOR S2s and Commanders. In this particular case, the BLUFOR S2 believed that the OPFOR never fought a security zone with initial and subsequent positions as outlined in doctrine, but instead set and fought in just one location. In this case the S2 templated an OPFOR defense vicinity Iron Triangle, Hill 876, Hill 780 and Chod Hill. This template was reinforced by the UAV's detection of logistic operations, coordination meetings, and preparation of BP 3-2 and 1-1 activity in that area. Although activity was detected in and behind the passes, these forces were written off as a screening force that would displace prior to fighting. Although other intelligence sources indicated otherwise, the brigade continued to believe that the fight would be a single echelon defensive battle. It wasn't until the division MEL feed, four hours before LD, that the brigade realized that there would be serious resistance vicinity the passes. However, it was too late to change the plan. As a result, the brigade's plan was desynchronized from the start of the operation.

As mentioned in the summary, the MRB commander prepared a MRP deception position with turret hulls and a deception (shallow) tank ditch to initially show strength in Debnam Pass and, therefore, attempt to influence the brigade commander to avoid this avenue of approach. However, this actually worked against the OPFOR. As discussed above, the brigade had a plan, and it ignored intelligence reports in the passes as only screening operations. Therefore, the brigade's maneuver plan was not influenced by the deception effort until they got into the passes. During execution the deception positions delayed the enemy as planned but the early firing of the FASCAM actually forced the lead task force to maneuver out of the developing fire sack. This, in turn, forced the MRB to withdraw his forces earlier than desired.

There are two key points to this discussion. First, many units have pre-conceived ideas on how the OPFOR is going to fight and tend to believe their perceptions and not evaluate the information available. In short, they fight their plan and not the enemy. The OPFOR will and does take advantage of this errors. Second, deception operations are a dual-edged sword that can work against a plan as well as support it. More often than not they work very well if planned as part of an operation and not as an afterthought.
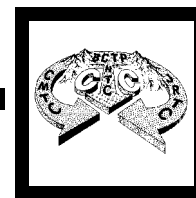
SUMMARY: Decision-point tactics are essential to fighting the fluid battlefield conditions present during the security zone battle. There are four imperatives to the successful execution of decision point tactics during the security zone.

Imperative 1: A unit must have good battlefield vision to clearly identify the conditions necessary to execute a specific decision. The complexity of the security zone battle maneuver plan necessitates a solid wargame and rehearsal process to assist in vision attainment.

Imperative 2: Successful reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance efforts are essential to identifying the decision-point conditions and denying the same to the enemy.

Imperative 3: The OPFOR's highly trained crews and platoons are the foundation for execution of decision-point tactics. Complex battlefield maneuver while in contact is impossible without this capability.

Imperative 4: Deception operations in support of the security zone battle are essential to gaining the time necessary to get inside the enemy commander's decision cycle. Decision-point tactics are neither unique or new, but they form the foundation for the OPFOR's successful execution during the security zone fight.
See you on the battlefield! ✪